



THE INDEPENDENT

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How fool's gold put a City trader in jail

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Global warming: how the world can help

Our Scorched Earth, part three

High street or top designer: who can tell?

Fashion



Ministers axe plan to cut pollution

Road lobby kills green agenda for traffic

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The Government has turned its back on a green agenda to reduce traffic and encourage more people to use public transport for fear of alienating motorists and the road lobby.

A range of targets to both reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and encourage people to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport such as cycling and walking have been kicked into touch by ministers who are preparing the Government's response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, which was published 18 months ago.

In Cabinet committee meetings which are finalising the response, Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman and former Secretary of State for Transport, insisted that any reference to targets was removed because it might anger motorists and the motoring lobby.

The Government has already committed itself to bringing down the overall level of carbon-dioxide emissions but the Royal Commission had wanted ministers to set specific targets for emissions from vehicles, which is responsible for around one-quarter of the carbon dioxide produced in Britain.

The commission had also set out detailed recommendations on reducing the proportion of urban journeys that are undertaken by car in an effort to im-

sponse to the Government's transport debate initiated more than a year ago by Dr Mawhinney when he was Secretary of State for Transport.

Ministers have been anxious not to be portrayed as anti-car, but the document will effectively spell the end of the pro-roads policy that was set out in the 1989 White Paper "Roads to Prosperity", which led to the Government spending more than £2bn per year on new roads.

One senior Conservative source said: "We are moving away from the era of the mega-transport policy which got us into so much trouble over the roads issue and resulted in a lot of money being wasted without solving the congestion problem. The document will be sensible, but unheroic, avoiding the previous approach of trying to find a unique solution for what is a very complex issue."

While the Government will stress that the country still needs some new roads, the idea of building enough roads to cope with increasing traffic will be abandoned.

Transport policy has long been predicated on the notion that rising prosperity necessarily leads to increased traffic growth, and the document will suggest ways of breaking that link.

A higher proportion of the Department of Transport's dwindling budget will be spent on public transport and "integrated" approaches to local transport will be encouraged — although the word "integrated" has been banned from the document as having socialist-style planning connotations.

Government ministers have also decided to reject the proposal, put forward by the Automobile Association and backed by Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, that the roads should be privatised and motorists should pay tolls rather than a petrol tax.

"That was not going to go down well with Mr and Mrs average motorist", a well-placed source said, "and anyway, the technology is nowhere near available."

Last week, the DoT admitted that trials on tolling technology had slipped behind schedule because of financing and technical problems.

Environmentalists will be deeply disappointed that the targets have been dropped. Stephen Joseph, the director of the pro-transport group Transport 2000, said: "There will be no real progress in reducing the environmental damage from transport unless clear targets are set at both the local and national levels."

Cyclone turns lifesaving contest into struggle to survive



Two boats competing in the Australian national surf lifesaving contest collide, throwing a 15-year-old crewmember of the boat on the left to his death. A sea carnival, of which the contest was a part, had gone ahead despite waves as high as 10ft being whipped up by Cyclone Betti along Queensland's Gold Coast.

Photograph: Reuters

Tories hide behind 'front' to raise cash

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The Conservatives are using a secretive "front" organisation to tap the City and industry for cash in the run-up to the general election, according to a report in the Independent.

News of the Council's activities will reopen the controversy about party political funding. It highlights the increasingly important role played by senior ministers and raises questions about preferential access for party backers. Last night, John Prescott, the Labour Deputy Leader, wrote to the Prime Minister demanding to know what guidance ministers receive before attending party fund-raising events.

Mr Prescott said he was also concerned that by making a do-

ing potential donors to meet Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has been passed to the Independent.

What will concern people in this instance, wrote Mr Prescott, is that "donations will not appear in company accounts as donations to the Conservative Party".

This is not the first time the Tories have used a shadowy, ambiguously-titled body to generate funds. A few years ago, party finances were channelled through private companies named after English rivers. The party has also used Aims for Industry and British United Industrialists to enlist support.

The address of the Council is given as 32 Smith Square, London SW1 — the same address as Conservative Central Office.

In the letter, Sir Nigel Mobbs writes: "The CILC arranges periodic meetings with the Prime Minister and other senior ministers..." The next meeting, he wrote, was to be with Mr Lang "by invitation of Arthur Andersen & Co", the giant accountancy and management consultancy firm, at its offices in central London.

Last night, a spokesman for Arthur Andersen said the meeting with Mr Lang was "hosted by a partner rather than the firm." It was a private matter for

the partner whom he would not name, but added: "The firm does not have any political affiliations."

Mr Lang, said Sir Nigel, would "make a short opening statement and will then take part in questions and answers". The President of the Board of Trade would then stay on "to meet those present over a drink".

Sir Nigel Mobbs' office said he was in Los Angeles on business and could not be contacted. A Tory Central Office spokesman said the party had no comment to make about the Council.

Slough Grandee, page 2



Europe dashes hopes of lifting British beef ban

SARAH HELM
and COLIN BROWN

European ministers last night dashed hopes of the immediate lifting of the worldwide ban on the export of British beef after plans for 4.6 million cows to be destroyed met a cool reception from Britain's EU partners.

Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, was last night fighting to persuade European ministers at an emergency meeting in Luxembourg to lift the ban, but sources said it would be "weeks" before it would be ended, and would not be agreed until the European veterinary committee was satisfied. "We will lift the embargo when we have a total guarantee we have no risk," said Philippe Vasseur, the French agriculture minister.

The European ministers

were also resisting British demands for the EU to pay 80 per cent of the estimated £3.7bn cost of the six year slaughter programme. German sources argued for Britain to pay at least 30 per cent of the cost and the French dismissed Mr Hogg's demands as "unrealistic".

As the hard-bargaining continued late into the night, there were signs that the European ministers wanted a more radical plan for slaughter of animals. Mr Hogg proposed killing and destroying all cows over 30 months, which were most at risk.

European ministers expressed fears that BSE could be in younger cattle and wanted entire herds of productive dairy cattle slaughtered and the meat incinerated. That could be a disaster for British farmers, unless they are fully compensated.

Ministers are seeking new ways of identifying BSE in cattle in order to cull herds positively identified with BSE to cut down the costs of a slaughter programme. John Major, the Prime Minister, told the Commons Britain was looking at "novel ways of getting the right beasts".

There was growing anger among Tory MPs last night at the refusal of the EU partners to agree to the lifting of the ban. The plan proposed by Britain entails the building of more incinerators to meet the workload. Some meat may have to be sold stored until it can be burned.

About 15,000 such cattle are slaughtered in Britain each week and their meat sold for low-grade food products such as burgers, sausages or beef products. In future these cattle

would be incinerated. Senior British agriculture officials said yesterday this process would continue for between five and six years, to ensure the disease had been removed.

At the rate of 15,000 cattle a week, a total of 780,000 cattle a year would have to go through incinerators, but there is only UK incinerator capacity to deal with a maximum of 3,000 a week. Over six years, the total number of British cattle incinerated could total 4,680,000.

Mr Hogg pressed his European partners to lift the ban as soon as possible. However, hopes that a deal might be reached yesterday dimmed. "This is the biggest challenge to the common agricultural policy since its inception," said Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner.



Brian Mawhinney: Opposed setting 'green' targets

prove the air quality in towns.

The Government has rejected this recommendation, but has agreed to... "lose a target for cycling. However, ministers have not yet decided to accept the recommendation that by 2005, 10 per cent of journeys in urban areas should be by cycle. The current total is 2.5 per cent.

The document, due to be published early next month, will also be used to set out the re-

IN BRIEF

Lamp 'cures cancer'
A lamp, no bigger than a toaster and has been used to kill cancer cells successfully. Page 3

Toddler's body found
A body believed to be that of toddler John Bristow has been found in a ditch. Page 3

Soviet spy sued
The Government is suing Soviet spy George Blake over his book about MI6. Page 4

Today's weather
Dry with sunny spells after a chilly start. Section Two, page 25

New male contraceptive is just the jab

REBECCA FOWLER

The male contraceptive "pill" has proved to be 99 per cent successful, a team of international scientists announced yesterday.

In the course of two year trials, at 15 centres around the world, the contraceptive was tested on more than 400 men and it has been shown it to be as effective as the pill for women, and safer than using a condom.

The British doctor on the re-

search team, Dr Fred Wu, a senior lecturer at Manchester University, described it as a "breakthrough" for the male contraceptive. He said: "It is very significant. It is really showing the world for the first time that permanent contraception for men really works."

For the men testing the contraceptive the only drawback is the form it comes in, a painful injection administered in the buttock each week. Further trials are already underway for longer-term injections com-

bined with a pill and skin patches, which are expected to take eight years to complete.

The contraceptive works by secreting the male hormone testosterone into the body to reduce his sperm count to a negligible amount. It fools the man's body into believing it has already produced adequate levels, because there is so much of the hormone in his system.

In previous tests the researchers had already discovered that sperm counts in 60 per cent of men could be reduced

to zero by weekly injections, and this could be achieved without affecting their sex life.

The new tests have revealed that it could be effective in a further 38.6 per cent of men by reducing the sperm count to a newly-discovered critical level. This had a failure rate of only 1.4 pregnancies in 100 couples.

Among the men who did not find success with the male contraceptive during trials was Kevin McQuade, 41. He was one of 29 volunteers at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester,

involved in the 18 month trial. He received the weekly injection from September 1993 and by March 1994 his sperm count had dropped from 40m to 200,000. Doctors declared him infertile, only for his wife to discover she was pregnant seven months later.

Dr Wu said the contraceptive was safe and effective, and that it was a "breakthrough" for the male contraceptive. He said: "It is very significant. It is really showing the world for the first time that permanent contraception for men really works."

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news

G7 summit: Ministers head for clash with EU partners by insisting on flexible labour markets

Britain rejects social clauses for trade pacts

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The UK was heading for a damaging split with its European partners at the jobs summit in Lille, northern France, last night after rejecting demands for social clauses in international trade agreements.

The dispute dashed hopes that the meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations would endorse the British emphasis on jobs flexibility as the solution to unemployment.

In a move that angered the French and Germans, William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Gillian Shepherd, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, rejected demands for the introduction of minimum labour standards in international agreements.

Mr Waldegrave said: "There is a considerable danger of seeing protectionism creeping in through the back door through such clauses." Britain was backed by Canadian and Japanese delegates who see export growth as the best way to raise standards in poor countries.

However, the European Union's social affairs commissioner, Padraig Flynn, will today call on the ministers to stop ducking the question of whether developing countries gain an unfair advantage from exploiting their workforce.

Earlier the French President Jacques Chirac said in his opening address that so-called social clauses in trade agreements were the only way to avoid protectionism.

The row echoes European concerns that Britain will gain additional competitive bene-

fits from opting out of the EU's Social Chapter.

There were further confrontations between Britain and its partners over the need for macro-economic co-ordination. Mr Chirac said economic, and especially monetary, co-ordination would be on the agenda at the next G7 summit in June.

Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, joined the attack. In a clear reference to the recent Franco-German plan for a second exchange rate mechanism for currencies outside the single European currency, to which Britain is firmly opposed, he said: "We must co-ordinate our policies to prevent beggar-thy-neighbour policies which simply move the problems from one country to another."

Britain also found itself isolated in its approach to tackling unemployment. Mrs Shepherd claimed deregulation had given Britain a better record of job creation than many of the other G7 countries. The perception of job insecurity was not fully borne out by the evidence, she said, sailing close to a recent statement by the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, that job insecurity was a "state of mind".

"Our record certainly is better than the other major European economies by far," Mrs Shepherd insisted. This was due to refusing to accept the burdens of the Social Chapter and minimum wage, she argued.

"Pain has to accompany any kind of change or restructuring. We had to face up to it," she said, agreeing that it would be difficult for the Continental economies to tackle inflexibility.

Mrs Shepherd emphasised the importance of facing up to change in the world economies.

She backed an argument made by Joseph Stiglitz, chairman of the US Council of Economic Advisors. Mr Stiglitz told delegates that security of employment had to give way to "security of employability". Workers needed to be equipped with the skills to cope with change.

The US is the only G7 country to have a more deregulated labour market than Britain. But the Clinton administration is alarmed about the growing income inequality and crime.

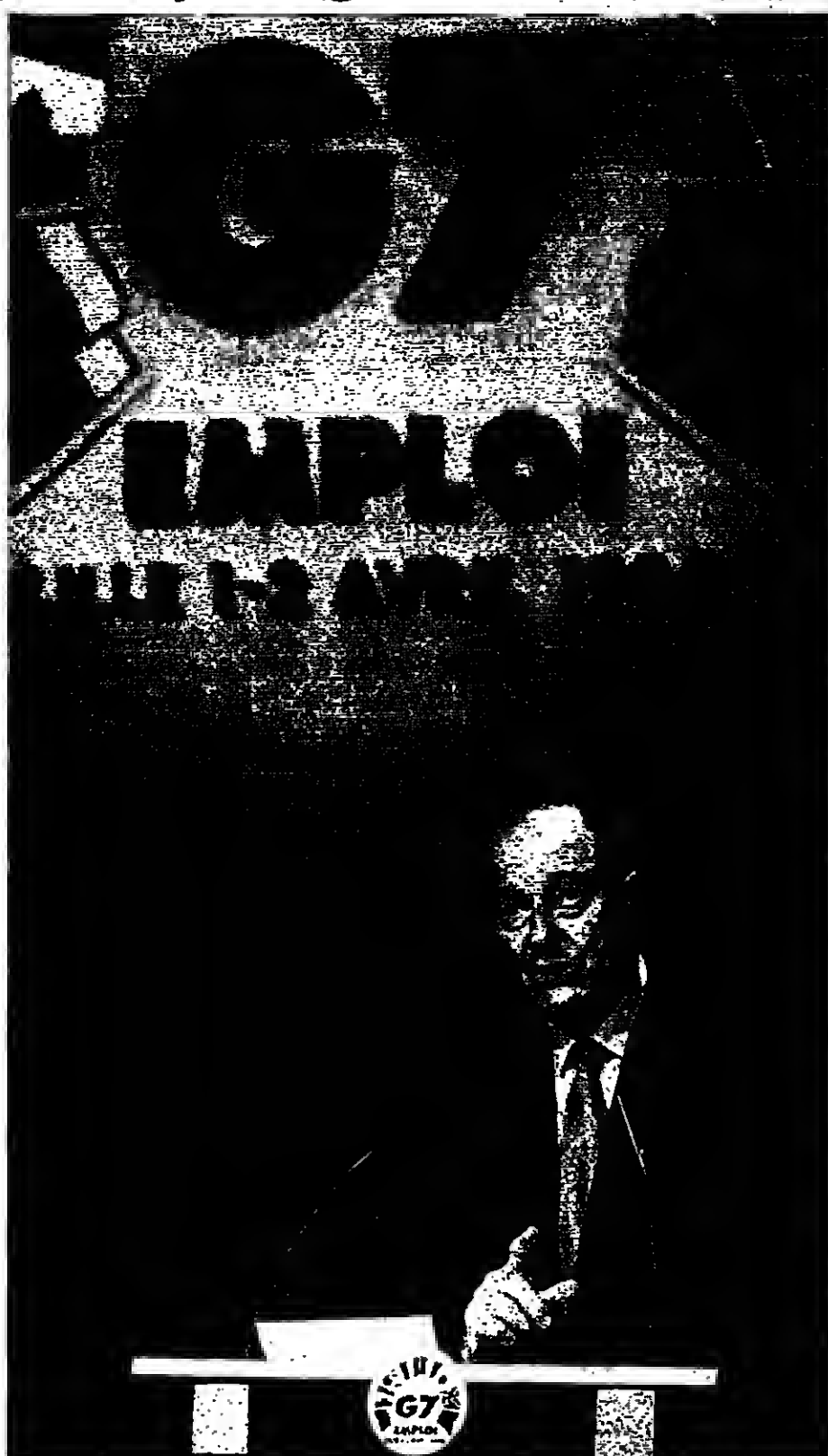
Britain could learn from Continental methods of vocational training, Mrs Shepherd said yesterday, but there was no alternative to the UK strategy.

The message for the creation of jobs is absolutely clear. You have to have a strong economy. You have to reduce burdens on employers and you have to have a flexible labour market," Britain's G7 partners, especially the Germans, agreed that there was a role for structural reform of their labour markets, but they placed a much greater emphasis on social cohesion.

Mr Chirac said "crude types of flexibility" were an obstacle to the creation of high quality jobs. "We are deeply attached to our European social model, founded on social security in keeping with human dignity," he said.

The summit, which ends today, was billed as an opportunity to exchange ideas on how to cut unemployment in the world's richest countries from its current level of more than 22 million.

Leading article, page 16



Speaking out: French President Jacques Chirac at the G7 employment meeting in Lille in which he said 'crude types of flexibility' were an obstacle to jobs. Photograph: Reuters

Police get new terror powers

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Emergency legislation to meet police demands for greater powers to stop and search terrorist suspects is to be rushed through and onto the statute books by Wednesday.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, yesterday told the Commons that the measures - to be introduced through amendments to the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act - were urgently needed to counter the renewed IRA threat, following the Docklands bombing, which ended the ceasefire.

But the announcement was immediately condemned by some Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs, while justice and human rights groups warned against the dangers of sweeping through "ill-thought through legislation. Parts of the 1974 Act have already been found by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg to breach international conventions on rights.

And Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of Northern Ireland's nationalist SDLP, described the move as "underhand in the extreme".

He said ministers had not mentioned proposals to "railroad" new measures through the Commons when the Prevention of Terrorism Act was renewed last month.

"It shows complete contempt for parliamentary procedure... They have engineered a situation where important and far-reaching powers will be introduced, affecting the communities in Britain as much as Northern Ireland, without any notice, analysis, consultation or amendment."

But Labour's front bench - anxious to avoid attack from Mr Howard that it is soft on crime or terrorists - has already made clear it will not obstruct the Government's counter terrorism proposals.

IN BRIEF

Inquiry ordered into island cancer claims

A health chief has been ordered to investigate claims that cancer cases in the Western Isles of Scotland are linked to the Chernobyl disaster ten years ago. The inquiry was ordered by the isles' health board after the claims, revealed by the *Independent* on Sunday, were made by two doctors on Benbecula. It will be carried out by the area's Director of Public Health, Dr Mike George, after GPs Francis Tierney and Andrew Senior reported that 19 new cases of cancer had emerged on the island since 1994 when only six were expected. Dr George said there was no need for mass screening and no link between radiation and the type of cancer found.

New refit for QE2

The QE2 is to enter dry dock in December for a major refit, almost two years after a similar overhaul ended with Camard, the ship's owner, paying out £7.5m in compensation. The 1994 refit, which cost £30m, was unfinished when the ship sailed from Southampton to New York. Some passengers were left behind because not enough cabins were available and work continued during the cruise.

You must be kidding

The town of Haslemere, in Surrey, woke yesterday to find that it had been re-named Hampton after the children's TV programme. In an April Fool's Day prank, the area's 60-plus road signs and markings had been changed overnight.

Family's body shock

The battered body of a 25-year-old man was discovered by members of his family in undergrowth next to a railway line. Melvyn Green of Broad Street village, near Guildford, Surrey, was reported missing late on Saturday. Detectives were yesterday questioning a man at Guildford police station.

Moscow air horror

Three Britons were killed when a Russian fighter pilot flew into power cables while showing off his plane, an inquest heard yesterday. Colonel Viktor Khaykov hit the cables as he took air buff Anthony Naylor, 30, of Pontefract, West Yorkshire, Russell Bessey, 37, of Woking, Surrey, and David Stephens, 38, of Pershore, Worcestershire, on a tour of Moscow last August. Verdicts of accidental death were recorded by the Wakefield coroner, David Hinchcliff.

Bid to save ponies

A 40 mph speed limit has been imposed across Dartmoor yesterday to help protect its famous ponies and other wildlife. Some 300 ponies, sheep and cattle are killed by cars every year on the 363 square mile National Park in Devon. Sheep and cattle will wear reflective bands at night.

No go-go place

A former stripper told a licensing hearing that plans by nightclub owner Peter Schingel to have topless dancers at his club in Covent Garden, London, will give the "green light" to men who think women are "for sale". The girls will be paid when guests put a £10 note in their stocking tops.

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Grandee of Slough who directs Tory cash drive

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

It comes as no surprise that Sir Nigel Mobbs should be chairing the Conservatives' anonymous fund-raising group, The City and Industrial Liaison Council.

For few businessmen have so successfully straddled the twin worlds of commerce and politics as Sir Nigel, 58. Neither are many people so closely identified with one place.

His chosen patch is Slough, reviled by Sir John Betjeman but for Sir Nigel a place of serious influence and undoubted wealth.

Since joining Slough Estates, the property company, in 1961, after school at Marlborough College and university at Christ Church, Oxford, he has based himself in the town.

He now runs Slough Estates, which under his stewardship has grown to be one of the country's biggest property developers, managing a portfolio worth £1.8bn and is chairman of Corporate Health, formerly Slough Occupational Health Service and of Slough Social Fund.

Locally, he is also president of the Buckinghamshire Association of Boys Clubs and head of the Council of the University of Buckingham.

Nationally, he used to be chairman of Kingfisher, the re-

Chris Blackhurst profiles Sir Nigel Mobbs, overseer of the Conservatives' shadowy fund-raising group



Sir Nigel: Straddling worlds of politics and commerce

tail group that owns Woolworths, and is on the board of Barclays Bank. As to be expected, quangos have not passed him by. He served on the Property Services Agency Advisory Board and on the Department of Trade and Industry's panel on deregulation. He is also a member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Sir Nigel, who is married with three children, was knighted in 1986. He is a member of the "board of treasurers" of leading businessmen assembled by Charles Hambro at Tory Central Office to try to wipe out the party's crushing bank overdraft.

He has made no secret of his party affiliations, once writing a letter to a newspaper claiming companies are subject to tighter rules on disclosure than trade unions.

"There is a legal requirement on companies, public and private, to declare in their accounts any donations they make to political parties," wrote Sir Nigel.

"There is no such legal requirement on unions, nor does the Labour Party publish a list showing how much every individual union gives."

that the event was hosted by an individual partner, not the firm.

Andersen, which was reportedly blacklisted by the Government for accounting advice over its role as auditor for De Lorean, the sports-car firm that was backed by public money and collapsed spectacularly in 1982, has been trying to rehabilitate itself with Whitehall.

A writ from the Government seeking damages of £168m for negligence over De Lorean apart, Andersen has still been picking up government work.

Its autonomous consultancy side, Andersen Consulting, has received contracts worth more than £50m from the Government since the dispute with its accountancy division began, the highest of which, for £34m, came from the Department of Social Security.

Other branches of government, including the Ministry of Defence and departments of Employment and Overseas Development, have also awarded contracts to Andersen.

In 1993, the accountancy side reportedly approached the Government to be re-consolidated for public-sector business.

The firm was said to have held discussions with senior officials and ministers over a possible breach of European Union law for being excluded from government contracts.

Referendum decision possible before Easter

DONALD MACINTYRE

John Major and a powerful coalition of Cabinet ministers will seek tomorrow to overcome the objections of Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and secure full backing for a pledge not to enter a single currency without a referendum. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, who has thrown his weight behind an early decision to promise a referendum, has already submitted to Downing Street his paper detailing the options on how to operate such a referendum.

The paper is expected to be circulated to the Cabinet today for discussion on Wednesday, holding out at least the possibility that the Prime Minister could announce a decision before the Commons rises for Easter later in the day.

Mr Clarke's decision not to attend a meeting of Group of Seven finance ministers in Lille yesterday triggered a fresh alarm in Westminster amid fears that he could be prepared to push his opposition to a referendum pledge to the point of resignation.

But Downing Street dismissed suggestions that he had remained in London for emergency talks with Mr Major on the referendum issue, pointing out that both the Canadian and United States finance ministers had pulled out of the meeting.

Mr Clarke has also been heavily involved in the negotiations with Brussels over the hoped-for BSE compensation deal.

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There were unconfirmed hints in Whitehall yesterday that while

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, agrees strongly with Mr Clarke, he could emerge as a mediator between him and the referendum pledge supporters, including Mr Major.

As some senior Cabinet ministers continued to express deep incredulity at the idea that Mr Clarke would push his objections to the point of resignation, one said the issue of whether the Euro-sceptics would seek to exploit a referendum by demanding more concessions was not an issue of "principle but tactics".

Mr Rifkind's paper does not make recommendations but is thought to lean towards the idea of a referendum coming after a Parliamentary decision endorsing a Cabinet decision.

News Analysis, page 15

Signs of recovery for house prices

NIC CECUTTI

Mounting evidence of a recovery in the housing market gained fresh impetus yesterday after figures from Halifax Building Society showed prices rose by 1.2 per cent in March, the biggest monthly gain in two years.

The rise, the eighth consecutive month in which prices have gone up, means the cost of a home is 1.7 per cent higher

than a year ago, despite the collapse throughout much of last year. The society said yesterday: "We are continuing to forecast a rise of 2 per cent for the year as a whole, but clearly this will be reviewed if the pattern of recent months is sustained," the society added.

Gary Munn, head of corporate affairs at the Halifax, warned, however, that there appeared to be a change in the

seasonal pattern of house prices since the Budget was moved from March to November in 1993. Before that, house prices tended to rise from the end of March, but now prices appeared to increase much earlier, only to peter out as the year progressed.

The Halifax survey differed from that of Nationwide Building Society, which last week said prices were flat in March.

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Pepsi turns the air blue as it tries to mirror Coke's red revolution

GLENDIA COOPER

The smiles will be wide and the fingers will be crossed today as Pepsi attempts supremacy in the global cola wars with a heavy of supermodels, a tennis star and a Concorde painted blue.

will be well aware that re-launching a cola is a dangerous business as Coca Cola found to its cost when it tried to alter the secret recipe.

But in a move that Pepsi describes as "the most important marketing development in its 100 year history" - and appar-

ently the most expensive - the company is ditching its traditional red-and-blue can and replacing it with an electric blue one to differentiate it from its main rival Coca Cola.

Air France has agreed to paint one of its Concorde in the new Pepsi colour, at an esti-

ated cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds as part of the promotion to launch the new cans.

The plane has been chartered for at least 10 days as part of the promotion to launch the new blue cans.

Today journalists from 40

countries are being flown and shipped to London Gatwick Airport to witness the news conference to end all news conferences, with supermodels Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer and tennis star Andre Agassi present.

As another part of the cam-

paign Pepsi have also paid the *Daily Mirror*, long-time Labour supporter to go blue for the day. Today will also be the first airing of the new Pepsi commercial starring Crawford and Agassi. It is estimated to cost £3m, the most expensive ever made.

In the bitter cola wars, Pepsi has always run second to the market leader Coca-Cola, the world's most recognised brand, which this year trumpets its sponsorship of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Coca Cola cup.

The two big brands are particularly under pressure in Britain from Virgin Cola and many supermarket own-brands. Virgin yesterday ran an April Fool's advertising campaign warning customers "if the can turns blue the cola's gone flat".

Lamp lights the way to skin cancer cure

GLENDIA COOPER

A lamp, no bigger than a household toaster, has been used to kill cancer cells successfully, a cancer charity said yesterday.

The device, invented by Dr Colin Whitehurst at the Paterson Institute in Manchester, emits an intense area of light directed on the affected area and has so far successfully treated 150 trial patients with early skin cancer.

Dr Whitehurst, who works for the Cancer Research Campaign's department of experimental radiation oncology, has spent more than five years developing photodynamic therapy (PDT).

The target area is pre-treated with a photosensitive drug which is activated by the light. Patients are able to read a book or relax while having the treatment, which is entirely painless. "PDT involves spreading a special cream on certain skin cancers which is taken up by the cancer cells. These cells are then killed by light from the new light source," said Dr Whitehurst.

The new lamp is 20 times cheaper to buy or operate than

conventional lasers. "The therapeutic effect of our light source, based on pre-clinical and patient tests, has been shown to be the same as or in some cases an improvement over certain lasers," Dr Whitehurst said.

Clinical trials are presently going on at the Glasgow Western Infirmary and Cookridge hospital, Leeds. Tests have been done on patients with early skin cancer [Bowen's disease] and so-called "rodent ulcers" [basal cell carcinomas] - the most common type of skin cancer in Britain.

To date 180 pre-cancerous and cancerous skin lesions have been treated and completely cleared. In Bowen's disease the lamp was shown to compare very favourably with the best current clinical practice and little if no scarring or side-effects have been noted, the charity said. Doctors have been encouraged by the results and are subsequently planning tests for brain, breast, gullet, prostate, bowel and gynaecological cancers as well as the skin disease psoriasis.

Professor Gordon McVie, who took up the post of director general of the CRC yesterday said: "This treatment for skin conditions can be applied on an outpatient basis and is both effective and people-friendly and is already being used in Glasgow and Leeds with convincing results."

"This is truly a remarkable invention which we believe will make a vital contribution to the way other important cancers are treated."

However, the charity admits that more research is still needed. PDT is currently not effective for melanoma nor for deeply spreading tumours.

"Although more research is required to define its place in cancer therapy, PDT using the new light looks to be a useful new weapon in the battle against cancer," said Dr Colin Morton, who has helped to conduct the trials at Glasgow's Western Infirmary.

CRC Technology, the Cancer Research Campaign's technology transfer arm, has filed a patent application to safeguard the invention.

Deals are expected to be announced shortly with American and UK-based companies to further develop the lamp for the international market.



Bright spark: Dr Whitehurst using the photodynamic therapy on a skin cancer patient

Photograph: Edward Webb

Toddler found dead in dyke

WILL BENNETT

A body believed to be that of the missing toddler John Bristow was found in a water-filled ditch only 30 yards from his home in a travellers' camp in Kent yesterday.

A police diver found the body wedged under rubbish 5ft under water during a search of the area around the 21-month-old boy's home near Lydd. It is thought he fell in accidentally.

John was last seen at 5pm on Sunday as he played outside his home on the caravan site. The search was delayed by a misunderstanding between his mother, Tracey Beane, and his grandmother, Annie Beane. His mother believed he had gone into Lydd with his grandmother and did not realise that he was missing until the latter returned. Travellers on the site immediately searched the area and called in the police.

After the body was found there were scuffles and some travellers shouted abuse at police for calling off the search during the night. But Douglas Dunn, John's grandfather, said: "There is no question of blaming the police. They were searching until late last night and they did their best."

Detective Chief Inspector Andrew Felton said the body was not found earlier because divers had to enter the ditch in darkness and feel their way through the water which was clogged with debris. "It was very murky and there were very high winds. Conditions were awful."



John Bristow: Search delayed by a misunderstanding

Lottery fillip for young stars of stage and sport

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Talented young people in sports and the arts are to benefit from National Lottery funds under a rule change unveiled yesterday by the Secretary of State for National Heritage, Virginia Bottomley.

Lottery "good causes" money, currently channelled into buildings and equipment, will now be open to bids which develop the potential of people, with emphasis on the young.

Mrs Bottomley said: "The lottery has been successful in creating and enhancing the physical fabric of our arts, heritage and sports worlds. The popular success of the lottery will allow us to invest in the nation's human capital as well as its buildings."

Labour quickly claimed credit for the idea. At Commons questions, Dr Jack Cunningham, the party's heritage

spokesman, told Mrs Bottomley he welcomed the move "because what you have done is to implement Labour policy". He said he had put the idea to her on "25 October last year". Mrs Bottomley said she was not going to spend time arguing over "ownership of the concept".

Sports and arts bodies welcomed the move. A spokesman for the Sports Council said: "We gave the heritage department a wish list and have got nearly everything we asked for. We have received over £180m from the lottery in schemes aimed at improving the bricks and mortar and now we will be able to look at other ways of funding sports."

Under the rule changes, money can be used to establish "talent funds" to develop the abilities of performers and artists; aid sports coaching and talent-spotting projects at grassroots and elite levels; and increase access to the arts, for example by supporting touring companies and subsidised ticket schemes for schools and community groups. It can also be used to fund one-off major sporting events.

The money can also now be used to restore historic buildings by extending aid to building preservation trusts.

A spokesman for the Department of National Heritage said the aim of the new rules, issued under the National Lottery Act, was to give organisations the "freedom to invest in talented individuals".

For the arts, it would mean investment in creative ability. "For example, at the moment companies like the RSC have beautiful homes in London and Stratford, but not everyone will be able to go and see them. This will bring the best of drama, music and dance to regional audiences," he said.

'Orgy of violence' schoolboys jailed

Three sixth formers were jailed yesterday after attacking two men during a drunken orgy of violence.

Cardiff Crown Court was told that Andrew Groom, David Vadden and David Willey, all 19, had brought shame on their families.

Instead of starting university they were locked up in a young offenders' institution after Judge John Curran told how they "exulted" in a rampage when they savagely attacked a church caretaker and a man who came to his rescue.

Sentencing them, he said: "There cannot be a separate law for those with intelligence."

Groom, Vadden and Willey

were all pupils at Cardiff High School - rated as the best in Wales - when they broke from their A-level studies and went on a binge drinking beer and cider near their homes in Cyncoed, a middle class suburb of Cardiff.

As they walked home, dishevelled caretaker Eric Cobourne and Ian Birtle, a book keeper, took the full brunt of their brutality, the court was told.

Mr Cobourne, 50, was kicked in the face outside his church while Mr Birtle, 33, was knocked almost unconscious as he tried to halt the violence. Mr Cobourne died two weeks later but his death was found to be from natural causes.

David Aubrey, for the prosecution, said: "They rampaged around the streets of this normally quiet suburb, behaving like three drunken hooligans."

In a trail of damage they wrecked a garden wall and gate. A Mercedes car was also vandalised. "Cobourne was verbally abused and then Groom threw a bottle at his head, leaving him with a wound that needed several stitches."

Mr Cobourne was then kicked in the head by Vadden. Mr Aubrey said: "It's claimed Vadden then turned to friends and boasted 'Did you see that - his nose just exploded'."

Asked why they had picked on Mr Cobourne, Vadden said:

"He was obviously not a Cyncoed person, he was different."

Mr Birtle was attacked and chased down the road before being kicked and punched. Mr Aubrey said: "Groom told him 'Say you are sorry'."

The trio admitted violent disorder and causing actual bodily harm. They were convicted of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm. Groom and Vadden were also found guilty of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

All three youths were said to be ashamed of their actions. Groom and Vadden were sent to a young offenders' centre for two years. Willey was ordered to be detained for 18 months.

Channel ferry firm cuts price of duty-free goods

NICOLE VEASH

A cross-Channel ferry company has cut duty-free prices on beer, spirits and cigarettes in an attempt to safeguard Easter trade from its rival Eurotunnel.

Stena has cut prices on all its routes to France by up to two-thirds and is selling 24 cans of Fosters for £9.99, £20 less than the average High Street price.

Although this is the second year Stena has reduced selected duty-free lines at Easter, the move is seen as a retaliation to a long-term promotion by Eurotunnel which is offering 60 per cent off retail off-duty-free prices at its terminals in Folkestone and Calais.

Eurotunnel, which is selling a litre of gin for £4.65, a litre of vodka and whisky for £6.65 and 200 cigarettes at £9.05 said the ferry companies were doing too little too late to save their duty-free business. Dominic Fry, director of communications, said: "Ours is a long-term pricing policy and not just a special offer. Unlike us, the ferry companies are offering an extremely limited range of products. Customers who want to buy duty free are just not travelling on the ferries any more."

A spokesman for Stena said the yearly product promotions were extremely successful and he described the company as a "floating shop". He added: "We

must give people reasons to travel across the channel by ferry, but we are not just a retail chain we are a leisure service company. The brands on offer are popular and well-known. The people love it and they keep coming back for more."

However rival ferry company, P&O, said it would not be cutting duty-free prices. "We don't need to manipulate prices for people to travel with us," a spokesman said. Recent retail industry figures show cross-Channel purchases account for 14.7 per cent of the UK's "off-trade" - items bought in off licences or supermarkets - and experts predict the share could grow by 20 per cent by 2000.

How supermarket prices compare with air and sea terminals

	Gordon's gin (1 litre)	Smirnoff vodka (1L)	Bell's whisky (1L)	24 cans Fosters	200 Benson & Hedges/Silk Cut
Stena (UK)	£14.79	£14.79	£15.99	£9.49	£27.10
Sainsbury's (UK)	14.79	14.79	15.99	n/a	n/a
Victoria Wine (UK)	11.24	15.06	11.51	4.35	n/a
Stena (France)	8.96	12.59	10.24/99	4.42	n/a
Sainsbury's (France)	11.96	11.58	14.41	n/a	n/a
Victoria Wine (France)					
Stena (P&O)	7.48	9.99**	8.30	7.99	13.00
Stena/Gatwick	6.35	8.00	6.45	7.35	10.00
Eurotunnel	10.25	11.25**	11.25	9.99	15.50
Stena	9.99	10.99**	11.45	10.95	15.50

*Price of cigarettes cannot be compared as they are sold in different quantities.
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Safeguards urged for water industry plans

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The Government is to introduce more competition in the water industry, but has said that choice would be initially limited to companies using hundreds of millions of litres every year.

The proposals, announced yesterday, were attacked as "nowt much" by the Labour Party which warned that average customers must not end up paying more to offset lower bills for industry.

Consumer groups also said that there must be safeguards to ensure that households, which have no ability to shop around, are not sacrificed for the sake of a "political gimmick".

A spokeswoman for the Consumers' Association said: "We welcome the extension of competition but it could be very expensive to move water

around the country and this could add to prices for the average consumer. There could be cross-subsidies and domestic consumers could actually see their bills going up to pay for competition which will only benefit large users."

The association also called for assurances that safety will not be compromised. The spokeswoman added: "We worry that if you mix the water from different companies it would be more difficult to trace the source of any germ or bug that might get into the system."

The proposal announced in a consultative document by John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, fell far short of expectations raised in comments by the Prime Minister at the weekend.

The plan will allow companies using an annual 250 megalitres - each megalitre is 230,000 gallons - to buy water from a

supplier other than their local company. The water would be delivered through the existing suppliers' pipelines under a "common carriage" arrangement. It extends very limited competition provisions which have been in place for about five years but which has yet to be taken up.

Mr Gummer said: "Competition is the best guarantee for consumers that they receive value for money, better services and lower prices."

He hopes to extend competition to other users "in the future". One City analyst dismissed the proposals as "an April Fool from Mr Gummer". He added: "I am not convinced that this talk of competition will actually change much."

Ofwat, the industry watchdog, said the proposals would potentially benefit "exceptionally" large users, probably about 600 to 700 companies a year.

A spokeswoman said: "The idea is have an evolutionary approach. The Government intends to extend it in due course but you are some time away from getting to domestic customers."

But she added that domestic consumers will not bear any extra costs. Ian Byatt, director-general of Ofwat, is looking at removing very large customers from the water firms' price caps, which would prevent firms shifting the balance of charges in favour of larger users.

Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, said: "These proposals do nothing about the fundamental failings of the privatised water industry, with its soaring prices, profits and bosses' pay and perks. It does nothing to stop the scandal of the leaks or the environmental damage of taking too much water from rivers and lakes during dry spells."



Wildlife heritage: Ministry of Agriculture officials survey a pond created by Andrew Cleaver on his farm at Chadlington, Oxfordshire, with a subsidy from the Countryside Stewardship scheme which is now run by MAFF. Photograph: Philip Meech

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Soviet spy sued for profits of his 'betrayal'

The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, yesterday took Soviet spy George Blake to the High Court to try to recover £90,000 he made from a book about his years with MI6.

Blake, who now lives in poverty in Moscow, after escaping from Wormwood Scrubs prison in 1961, turned down an offer to appear personally to defend himself.

He declined to offer any defence but is being represented by Lord Lester QC, who is also appearing for his London publishers, Jonathan Cape, in a parallel action brought by the Attorney General.

Mr Philip Havers QC, representing the Attorney General, told the Vice Chancellor, Sir Richard Scott, that Blake had broken his trust with the security and intelligence services by writing the book. *No Other Choice*, which deals with Blake's time with MI6 between 1947 and 1961, displayed a "flagrant disregard" of his duties, from which he had "unjustly" made money, said Mr Havers.

He said that although there was no breach of confidence - Blake had already told the

Russian authorities all the secrets he knew - a fiduciary duty remained.

Because the information had been passed to the Russians, it could no longer be regarded as confidential, said Mr Havers. It was a breach of confidentiality in that Blake had broken the trust of the security services. Therefore, the correct remedy would be for the Crown to take any profits he had made.

Jonathan Cape, who are not defending the action, told the profits of the book, which have been frozen since publication in 1991.

Blake, 73, who was responsible for the deaths of several British agents, received a £35,000 advance for the book he wrote in Moscow.

Lord Lester, appointed by the Crown to look after Blake's interests, said that if the former security officer was prevented from publishing a story about his life because he was employed by the Crown, then ministers should be subject to the same code and stopped from publishing their memoirs.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

DAILY POEM

The Moon Over London

By David Gascoyne

Last night a woman's veil
Above the city drifting like a bar
Or some lost wing of smoke
By hateful influences was rent in twain
Predicting ruin for the denizens below

Out of its house of cerulean shell
The twin-breasted eclipse
Released its venom on the world
And poured its quick-tongued vapours
on our sleep
While dire hounds howled on Hampstead Hill.

Then sighed the half-extinguished torch:
'Aversion of the violence foretold
Is in the courage of the weak
To brace the breaking rock
And cut adrift the tethered keel of Time.'

David Gascoyne was born in 1916 and published his first volume of poems as a schoolboy in 1932. The following year he visited Paris, coming into contact with writers and painters of the Surrealist movement such as André Breton and Louis Aragon, and publishing his own account, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, in 1935. He was one of the few British poets to be strongly influenced by the movement, although its impact was also felt by Lawrence Durrell and Dylan Thomas. This poem, written before 1940, appears in *Nineties Poetry: Winter 1995-96* published by the Lansdowne Press at £4.95.

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news

Hedge gets chop in feud that divided neighbours for 18 years

An 18-year battle over a garden hedge took a decisive turn yesterday when one of the combatants was given the go-ahead to lop nearly 20ft off its height.

The hedge—a row of 10 Leylandii fir trees—in the Bourneville area of Birmingham, had grown to a height of 30 ft, and Michael Jones, 67, and his wife, Maureen, have been complaining for years that it was blocking their light.

The trees belong to the Jones's neighbour, 88-year-old Charles Stanton, but despite a succession of court cases estimated to cost around £100,000, he has refused to allow them to be pruned.

Yesterday Mr Stanton remained behind locked doors. A cardboard coffin was placed outside his home with the epitaph: "RIP My Lovely Trees, whose gentle green mantle has so nobly softened my gaze against the ugly reality beyond."

Mr Stanton planted the hedge in 1971 as soon as the Joneses moved in. Trouble flared in 1978 when Mr Jones claimed the hedge was too tall at 20 ft and blocked his light.

Following three court cases, including one at the High Court in London, a Birmingham County Court judge ruled Mr Jones could prune the trees to open "reasonable" height. Mr

Stanton was ordered to pay costs of up to £70,000, but he has vowed to continue fighting.

In the course of the battle, Mr Stanton's son, Paul, has been convicted of assaulting Mr Jones, papers on the case fill three bulging files and the wrangle has even been debated on *Gardeners' Question Time*.

The row also made history when a court was obliged to deliver a legal definition of a hedge: "A number of woody plants, whether capable of growing into trees or not, which are so planted after being felled together as to form both screen and barrier."

Mrs Jones said as the trees were lopped: "I'm obviously overjoyed. It's just beyond my comprehension how can anybody be so nasty as to want to stop someone seeing the blue sky and winter sun."

The Jones's problems may not be over, however. Mr Jones explained: "Beyond this hedge we have the problem of a second hedge of trees. In three years' time I know this second hedge will be a nuisance."

The former Labour minister, Lord Howell, is backing the Jones's fight for new laws to give householders the right to control neighbours' hedges and to stop unnecessary litigation.



Chainsaw massacre: A forester gets to work on the hedge. Reducing its height from 30ft to 12ft took more than three hours. Photograph: Newsteam

Motorist jailed over attack

A road rage motorist, who has been repeatedly convicted of attacking women after losing his temper at the wheel, was yesterday jailed for six months and banned from driving for two years.

Paul Erkiert, 41, from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, who was said in court to "have a problem with his temper", was told he was a dangerous man on the roads. Judge Laurence Marshall told Erkiert, who admitted assault: "On this crowded island we have to live with others and accept their imperfections."

"You have on a number of occasions attacked women because you have been annoyed with their driving or because they have complained about your driving. You have been given lenient sentences in the past but the time has come for people to be protected from you."

Luton Crown Court was told that Erkiert's past convictions included a conditional discharge for an almost identical offence: being fined for common assault and being fined for criminal damage.

Jail 'sent woman to court in nightdress'

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Holloway prison "degraded" a woman by sending her to court wearing only her "nightie and negligee", a scathing report into the country's largest women's jail has revealed.

News that the prison has shut the voluntary clothing service, leaving many inmates—particularly the mentally ill, homeless and foreign nationals—without basic items such as shoes and underwear, is the latest scandal to hit the troubled prison.

It comes in the annual report of the jail's Board of Visitors, which paints a picture of a management on the point of collapse, with demotivated staff, running a squalid jail with some inmates being locked in their cells for 20 hours a day. Poor health care, lack of education

and activities and an increase in drug-related bullying and assault are condemned in the report, which calls on the Home Secretary for action and assurances.

The prison in north London last hit the headlines, when the new Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbottom, walked out in disgust at the infestation of rats, cockroaches and lice and "overzealous" security—in particular the use of manacles and chains on pregnant and seriously ill women attending hospital. He has still not returned to the jail to complete the inspection.

The ensuing outcry eventually forced an about-turn by the Government over the use of shackles on pregnant women—concerns also raised by the Board of Visitors. It also reveals that large amounts of inmates' cash went missing from regis-

tered post going in and out of the troubled prison. And that some inmates were locked in their cells for such prolonged periods over weekends that they could not bath or shower.

"The board believes that lack of purposeful regime was profoundly damaging to the ethos of the prison and to the lives of inmates," concludes the report. "It is demeaning, inhumane and damaging to mental and physical health to keep women isolated and locked in their cells with little respite."

But it acknowledges that there have been some major improvements since January, when Mike Sheldrick became the new governor.

Sources suggested that five bin bags full of rats were carried out of jail; grass is now growing over the "rat runs", and the filth has been cleared. Women are

not being locked in cells for such long periods and new senior medical staff have improved health facilities within the jail.

But concerns remain about the plight of teenagers, the mentally ill and Category A high-risk offenders. Furthermore, there is still no clothing provision at the jail for the foreign, homeless and mentally ill women, among its 500-plus population. "It is a fundamental right of women to be decently clothed. It is basic to justice that they should be well presented for court appearances," the report says. It is deplorable that management has been unable to provide for this.

Rachel Palmer, the outgoing chairman said: "The complex needs of Holloway and the female population were not fully understood. Help was too little and too late."

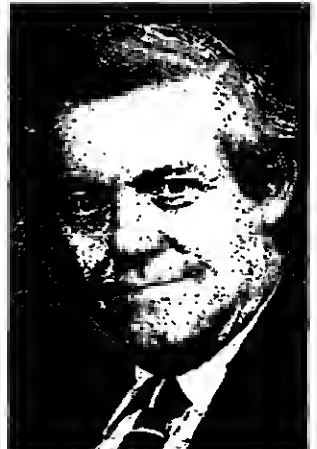
Governors give warm welcome to new prison service chief

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Richard Tilt, the man called upon five months ago to run the Prison Service in the wake of Derek Lewis's controversial sacking, was yesterday formally appointed to the post of Director General—on about half the salary of his predecessor.

Mr Tilt, 52, will earn £77,000, the salary of a Grade 2 civil servant, with performance pay up to an estimated £5,000. Derek Lewis, the first businessman lured in from industry to try turn the troubled service around under its new "agency" status, earned £125,000 with up to £35,000 in annual bonuses.

As a former prison governor, Mr Tilt's appointment has delighted both governors and staff in the country's 136 jails. They had viewed the appointment of Mr Lewis, a former television executive with neither government nor prison experience, as



Richard Tilt: Changed his mind about taking the job

a costly and failed experiment. Last week, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, conceded he would pay up to £200,000 to settle Mr Lewis's claim for unfair dismissal after a damaging prison escape inquiry.

But there was no initial decision by ministers to resort to "in-house" appointments. In the five months since Mr Lewis's sacking, informal approaches were made to people like Andrew Foster, controller of the Audit Commission, to see if they would be interested. Further, head-hunting agencies told the Home Office that Mr Howard's treatment of Mr Lewis made it unlikely that the post would be able to attract high-quality candidates from outside the service.

Mr Tilt himself, although commanding the respect of all prison staff, was also initially reluctant to stand for the job—widely regarded as a poisoned chalice. But his success over the past five months has both changed his mind and convinced ministers that he is the man for what they accept is a very difficult job.

Last night, David Roddan, general secretary of the Prison

Governors' Association said: "We are delighted at this news. We have long campaigned to have a head of the service who has personal experience of running prisons. Mr Tilt has this and he will enjoy the full confidence of prison governors in this country."

Yesterday, Mr Howard, who made the announcement in a Commons written reply, said: "Richard Tilt has done an excellent job as Acting Director General. I have every confidence that he will provide the service with the leadership it needs."

Mr Howard said he also proposed to establish a Prison Service Advisory Board to advise on the performance and plans of the service. Mr Tilt's 30-year career in the Prison Service has included governing both Gartree and Wakefield Prisons, as well as being a regional manager and, most recently, director of services and custody.

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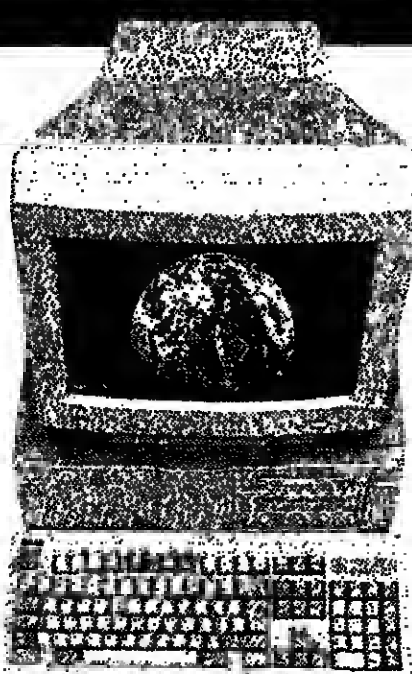
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Fraud charge PC is found dead in forest

A policeman cleared seven years ago of murdering his wife in Portugal has been found dead in a fume-filled car.

Constable Alan Waldock, 41, was due to appear before a Northumbria court tomorrow charged in connection with a £13,000 credit card fraud.

His body was discovered early on Sunday morning on a deserted track deep in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. It is understood that Gloucestershire police have found a number of notes. A post-mortem examination was due to be carried out yesterday.

Relatives, including PC Waldock's 13-year-old son, Christopher, were said to have been shocked by his death.

Inspector Dean Walker, of Gloucestershire Police, said police officers found the constable in his car on an isolated track in the forest.

The inspector added: "He was discovered in an Austin Metro car which we believe was his. We cannot say what the cause of death was until the results of a post-mortem examination are released. But there are no suspicious circumstances."

The Gloucestershire and Northumbria forces have

launched a joint investigation into his death.

Last month PC Waldock, who was suspended from duty with the Northumbria force, was accused of 10 deception charges at Morpeth police station.

PC Waldock had earlier hit the headlines when he was charged with killing his wife, Doris, 33, while they were holidaying in Faro, in the Algarve, Portugal, in 1988.

Mrs Waldock had drowned in a whirlpool bath at the couple's time-share villa at the Vale Navio holiday complex.

The court in Faro decided she slipped and banged her head.

Her husband, who had always protested his innocence, was acquitted of her murder after a 12-day trial which attracted world-wide media attention.

In August 1990, a coroner recorded an open verdict on Mrs Waldock's death.

Four years ago, PC Waldock and his son moved from the Northumbria area to Cinderford in Gloucestershire, where they set up home with a woman he had met while on holiday in Jersey, but he continued to work for Northumbria police.

Last year, PC Waldock was arrested at a relative's house in Northumbria. He was detained at a police station for questioning over allegations relating to the use of a number of credit cards.

He was suspended from the Northumbria force in July 1995 during an investigation into the allegations and was eventually charged to appear before South-East Northumbria magistrates at Bedlington, tomorrow. Before his suspension PC Waldock had been based at Clifford Street, Byker, where he worked part-time in the central operations control room.

PC Waldock's former brother-in-law Detective Sergeant Alan Barber, an officer with Northumbria fraud squad, said yesterday that news of his father's death had left Christopher distressed and in a state of shock.

He added: "Christopher has been through a lot after the death of his mother. He was in the care of my parents while Alan Waldock was in jail in Portugal. But he went back to live with his father after he was cleared of the murder. Christopher loved both his parents."



Alan Waldock, who was cleared of killing his wife Doris (above)



Dispute hits shipping forecasts

LOUISE JURY

Coastguard leaders may go to court in the next round of a dispute which is disrupting the shipping forecasts broadcast daily on BBC Radios 3 and 4.

The Public Services Tax and Commerce Union is taking advice on the legality of plans by the Coastguard Agency to end special payments to coastguards who have provided readings of weather conditions at coastal stations from Three to Malin Head since 1949. Staff at 15 stations have stopped supplying the information in protest.

Under an informal arrange-

ment, the work has been done voluntarily, ostensibly in coastguards' own time, after training, again in their own time, at the Meteorological Office's training college near Reading.

Volunteers receive payments of between £200 and £800 a year from the Met Office for supplying readings of wind direction and speed, visibility, pressure and general weather conditions. The Met Office is happy with the present arrangement.

But the Coastguard Agency, which buys back some of the information for seafarers, has decided it is illogical. It claims

the work is part of the coastguards' duty and therefore any Met Office payment should come to the agency.

A spokeswoman said: "We are paying the Meteorological Office back for the information collected by our own staff during their working day which does not make sense."

However, Dutchy Holland, chairman of the coastguards' section of the Public Services Tax and Commerce Union, said that the arrangement had been "established custom and practice" which the Coastguard Agency was seeking to overturn because it was kept short of cash

by the Department of Transport.

"We are seeking advice on the legality of these actions with a view to challenging the decision in court. Our belief is that the agreement is between the individual officer and the Met Office. The coastguards are very, very angry over this."

A Met Office spokesman said the protest was unfortunate but did not affect forecasting. It simply meant that the conditions at those stations, which were normally read out at the end of shipping forecast on Radio 4 and the end of the inshore forecasts on Radio 3, were being omitted.



Hollywood reflections: Swirling skirts of backless gown in Bob Mackie's New York show Photograph: Sheridan Morley

Movie setting for time-warp show

TAMM BLANCHARD
Fashion Editor

A Twenties time warp seems to have trapped the New York designers this season. Hollywood wardrobes have been resurrected and thrift shops ransacked for stock to copy.

Bob Mackie, the designer who put Cher in the infamous black cobweb dress for the Oscars in 1986, launched his new evening collection on Sunday. These were glamorous clothes column dresses with Art Deco detailing and beading — for society women to wear to cocktail parties and formal so-

cial engagements. Prices go up to \$3,000 (about £2,000).

The show was held at the candlelit Laura Bell's supper club and was like a scene from a Forties movie. The clothes were pure showbiz glamour with a hit of Las Vegas thrown in. The Californian designer's roots are in Hollywood where he worked at Paramount and then for television as the costume designer for *The Judy Garland Show* in the Sixties and *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*.

Mackie's clients include Cher and Madonna, newscaster Carol Burnett, actress Carol Channing — and the drag queen Ru

Paul who turned up for the show dressed as a man in a sombre suit and no hint of mascara.

Anna Sui, the wacky Downtown designer, showed an autumn/winter 96 collection on Sunday evening with references to both the Sixties and the Twenties with cloche hats, ultrasuede coats with tie belts, distressed leather jackets worn with sensible tweed, and the sort of clothes that would look like secondhand tat to anyone but the initiated.

After the thrift stores and flea markets, Sui turned to what she called "eccentric English" and cast her eye over the clothes of

Vivienne Westwood. Window-pane checks were made up into trouser suits, Miss Marple skirts and jackets that showed just how little originality the New York designers have.

Even the evening wear — beaded flapper dresses with handkerchief hems — was lifted from Twenties originals. And why buy Anna Sui when you can still buy antique dresses with all their fine craftsmanship at a fraction of the price of Sui's?

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Backbench sniping holds up divorce bill

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government was forced to delay the next stage of the controversial Family Law Bill last night as Tory rebels said they would try to defeat key parts of the reforms to divorce.

The Lord Chancellor's Office had to postpone the committee stage of the Bill, due today, after the Government decided to rush emergency anti-terrorism legislation through the Commons. Ministers denied they were retreating.

The delay was welcomed by the Bill's opponents, who believe they can use the postponement to build up opposition to the measure.

Edward Leigh, a minister who was sacked by John Major, is leading the Commons campaign against the measure with other right-wing senior Conservative backbench MPs: Dame Jill Knight, John Patten, the former education secretary and John Redwood, the leadership challenger.

They tabled amendments to the Bill yesterday to tighten grounds for divorce by insisting on fault-based divorce and doubling the proposed cooling-off period to two years before a divorce can go through.

The Government has already given way to opponents by allowing a free vote on key sections. It expects to be able to win with Labour support but yesterday's delay heartened those opposed to the measure.

Mr Leigh said he was confident he could win support from ministers and a large group of backbenchers unhappy with the changes planned by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, in the Family Law Bill.

The measure seeks to introduce no-fault divorces for the

first time and to give couples a 12-month cooling-off period before they can sign a statement leading to a final divorce.

One amendment, insisting on guilt being considered, would require the court to be satisfied that one of the parties had committed adultery and that they had lived apart for a continuous period of at least a year; or that one of the parties had behaved in an intolerable way; or that they had lived apart for at least two years.

Other amendments would increase the cooling-off period to 18 months or two years where one party did not consent to the divorce or where there were children under 16.

Mr Leigh said: "It sends out the wrong message to young people embarking on the most important decision of their lives. If you have no fault, you are signing a contract which is meaningless."

Middle-aged women who have spent a long time raising a family will be told they are being ejected from their marriage without reasons."

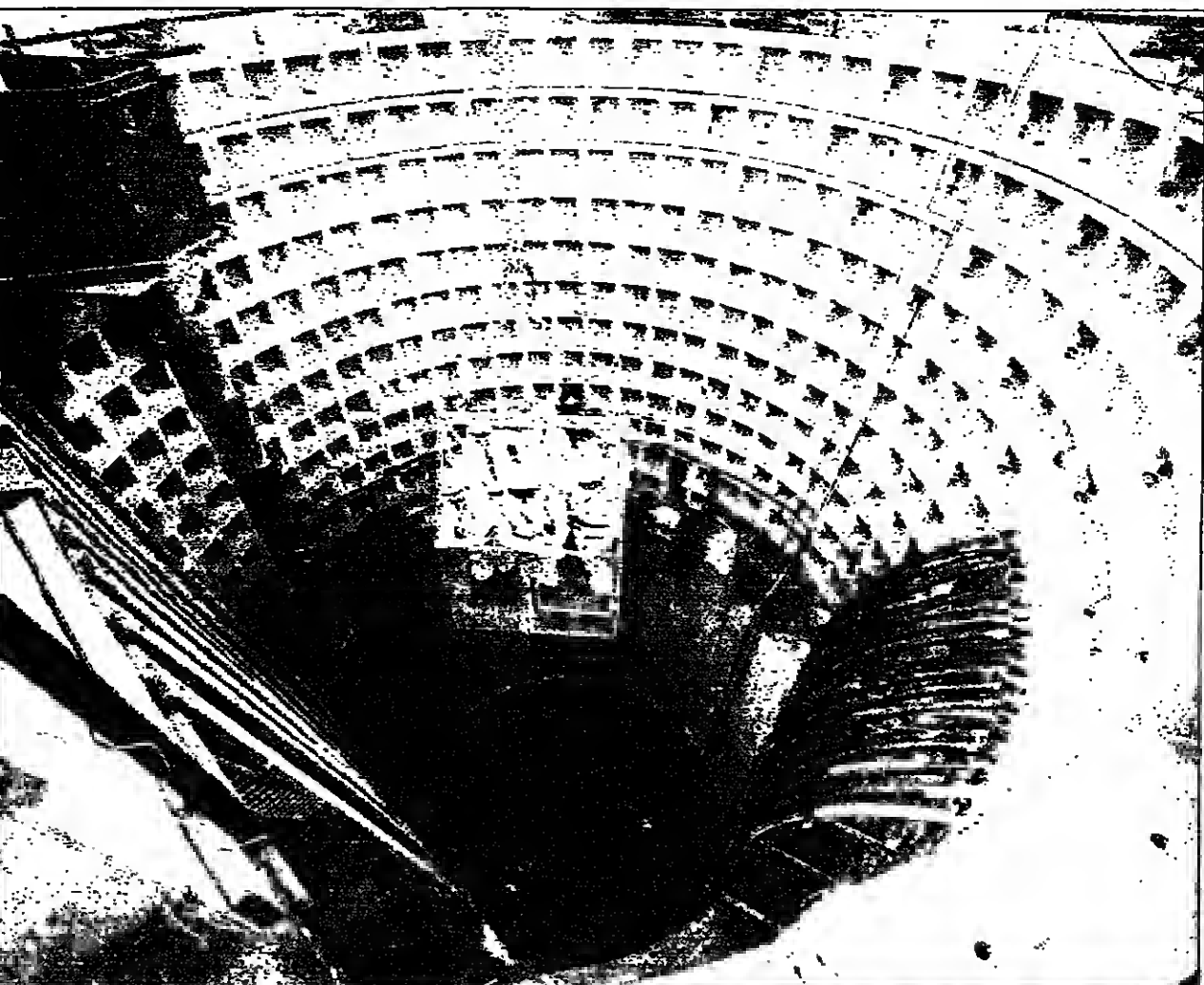
The Government insists the Bill strengthens the institution of marriage and the cooling-off period will slow down divorces, giving couples more chance to settle their differences.

Mr Leigh said there was growing support for his proposals from Christian family groups and that some ministers could back him in the lobbies.

The Bill was opposed in the Lords by the peers' former Conservative leader, Baroness Young, who is concerned about the effect of marriage breakdown on children.

The Government relied on the backing of Labour's front bench and will do so again when the Bill is debated after the Easter Recess.

Minister investigates tunnel vision for the capital's consumers



Going underground: The Energy minister Tim Eggar is lowered into the top of a 10-km electricity cable tunnel yesterday. The link, built by London Electricity, runs under the Thames from Wimbledon to Pimlico. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Sceptics attack Major on fish

STEPHEN GOODWIN

John Major yesterday came in for further sniping from Tory Euro-sceptics who believe he failed to take a sufficiently tough line at the Turin European summit on fishing rights and the single currency.

Reporting to MPs on the outcome of the meeting - marking the start of the Inter-Governmental Conference on the workings of the EU - the Prime Minister was also pressed over the possibility of a referendum on a single currency.

With the Cabinet expected to discuss the divisive poll tomorrow, senior Conservative Tim Rathbone said many Tories supported Mr Major's initial view that referenda were "not at all part of robust parliamentary procedures".

The Prime Minister said he did not think anything was remotely likely to come out of the IGC that could justify a referendum.

He said: "The one area where I think there may possibly be a case for a referendum is in the case of any decision taken to join a single currency, since that clearly isn't a matter that is likely to be determined before a general election."

Meanwhile Tory Eurosceptics

pointed up the absence from Mr Major's statement of any reference to reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, on which the Government had promised to act, and they questioned the lack of opposition to monetary union.

John Redwood, the former Welsh secretary, complained of "daily damage" to the British fishing industry and urged the Government to consider unilateral action if it failed to get support for reform from other EU states.

Mr Major said opting out of the CFP would not be in the interests of the industry. "The great danger of that would be that in a measurably short period of years the fish would be so over-fished that there would be no fishing industry left."

Leading sceptic Bill Cash, Conservative MP for Stafford, drew attention to the Presidency conclusions from the summit, which reaffirms the EU's commitment to economic and monetary union, and asked if Mr Major intended to reject a single currency.

The Prime Minister explained that the single currency was being discussed in parallel to the IGC and he repeated his doubts that the 1999 deadline could be achieved.



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Yeltsin peace plan falls on deaf ears

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

President Boris Yeltsin's peace plan for Chechnya, seen as crucial to his chances of re-election in June, received a largely unenthusiastic response in Russia yesterday — on the ground it proved impossible to put a neat end to fighting at midnight.

Russian shelling eased after Mr Yeltsin appeared on television on Sunday to announce a unilateral ceasefire and partial withdrawal of troops. But in the small hours of yesterday morning, Muslim rebels ambushed an army unit in the south-eastern village of Vedeno, killing 28 servicemen and wounding 69.

Serving Russian soldiers said

they believed they would soon be fighting again. "The rebels have got used to the feel of a gun and are not going to give up that easily," said one conscript in Grozny. Another complained that the partial troop withdrawal would leave those who stayed behind "sitting ducks".

Among domestic politicians, the most charitable comment on the peace plan, which envisages parliamentary elections for the Caucasus and talks on possible autonomy but not independence, came from Sergei Yushenkov, a leading democrat, who said it was "undoubtedly positive although belated".

But the retired General Alexander Lebed, who plans to

challenge Mr Yeltsin for the presidency, dismissed the programme as a "pre-election profanation". As a military professional, I can say it is impossible to stop hostilities after a year and a half of massive aerial bombings. The question arises why this war was needed in the first place.

Western reaction was cautious. In Washington, a White House spokesman welcomed the initiative but said the US would be "looking for execution". While we have been sympathetic to the very difficult situation he [Mr Yeltsin] faced there, we have also been concerned with what we consider to be an excessive use of force.

Most elements of Mr

Yeltsin's plan were predictable. Russian forces spent March less as at the start of the war in the winter of 1994-95. The aim was to push fighters loyal to the separatist leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, back into the southern mountains and to intimidate as many settlements as possible into handing over their weapons and becoming "islands of peace".

Thus, it came as no surprise when Mr Yeltsin announced that two-thirds of Chechen territory was now under Russian control, making possible a withdrawal of some army units to the regional border. Kremlin forces left in Chechnya would keep up the fight against "terrorists".

The unexpected part of Mr Yeltsin's plan was his offer to hold indirect talks with Gen Dudayev, whom Moscow has up to now written off as a criminal. In a lively interview with Russian journalists after his rather dry speech, Mr Yeltsin said not all his advisers agreed with him but he had found mediators who would be prepared to go between Moscow and Gen Dudayev.

He spoke of an unnamed Arab sheikh, a former Soviet dissident identified as Orlov and the Kazakh leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, as possible intermediaries. Yesterday Mikhail Gorbachev, who is trying to get back into the Kremlin, offered his services too, as did politicians

from independent Lithuania and the Muslim Russian region of Tatarstan.

"We are aware," Mr Yeltsin said in a sensational admission, "that Dudayev has built up strength and gained authority with a certain part of the population of Chechnya. This authority is not without taint and is sometimes criminal. But it is authority all the same."

The point of the talks remained a puzzle, however, for Gen Dudayev has said all along that nothing short of full independence will satisfy him while Mr Yeltsin said on Sunday the most he could offer Chechnya was the same kind of autonomy which Tatarstan enjoys.

Gen Dudayev did not immediately respond to the offer but his fighters gave a hint of the likely reaction. "Yeltsin just wants to preserve his job and is pretending to be a nice guy," said Isa Asukhanov, a rebel in southern Chechnya. "They started this war. As long as Russian troops remain on our territory, we will fight them."

Results might not be as important to Mr Yeltsin as impressing the electorate. He has described the Chechen conflict as the "biggest disappointment of my presidency", thus showing he is capable of acknowledging his mistakes. Now he may be perceived as at least trying to do something about his self-created problem.

The plan might help to get

Dudayev: The Kremlin has recognised his 'authority'

Mr Yeltsin re-elected even if it fails to stop the war. With the exception of Grigory Yavlinsky, who advocates a referendum on Chechen independence, few other politicians have any concrete alternatives to offer; and for economic reasons, many Russians are afraid of the Communists.



Dudayev: The Kremlin has recognised his 'authority'

Islamic terror link to French siege

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

French police were yesterday contemplating the possibility of a link between Islamic terrorism, cross-border drug trafficking and a series of ultra-violent bank robberies, following last Friday's fatal shoot-out in the northern city of Roubaix.

A total of five men, presumed gang members, were killed and a sixth — named as Omar Zerni — is in Belgian police custody after fleeing across the border. Two French policemen were seriously injured.

The Islamic aspect came to the fore after police and judicial sources disclosed yesterday that fundamentalist magazines, some of them banned in France and connected with the Algerian terrorist grouping, FIS, had been found at the house raided by police on Friday, along with a large quantity of firearms. More magazines, weapons and grenades, were found in a car belonging to two of the gang members and stopped by Belgian police after the Roubaix raid.

Four of the five dead were of north African origin; the fifth, Christophe Coze, was French, but had converted to Islam.

The Islamic link, which is matter of great sensitivity after last summer's bombing campaign in Paris, had initially been discounted by the French interior minister, Jean-Louis Debré, who described the gang as "ordinary racketeers". There was no question, he said, "of terrorism, or Islamic fundamentalism". Subsequently, however, he was more circumspect, telling reporters: "It is not impossible that some areas of gangsterism may be associated with some areas of Islam."

Last week's events began with a small explosion in a

stolen car parked outside police headquarters in Lille. Police said that several gas canisters had been placed inside the car and had been connected to a crude remote-control device. They were reluctant, however, to talk of a car bomb or to moot an Islamic connection.

Although some drew a connection with the imminent arrival of President Chirac and foreign dignitaries in Lille for the Group of Seven summit

the house; there was an extensive shoot-out which resulted in four occupants dead and the house engulfed in flames.

Two men escaped by car, threw off the pursuing police and crossed into Belgium. Stopped by the Belgian police, one of the men was shot dead; the other ran into a nearby house and held two women hostage until forced out by police. Apparently the only survivor of the immediate gang, he is being held in Belgian custody.

The initial theory was that at least one of the men hiding out in the Roubaix house was connected with a series of unsolved robberies in the area, distinguished by the ruthlessness of the gang and the sophistication of their weapons.

The upsurge in violent, often drugs-related, crime in north-eastern France and the relative ease with which criminals could cross the Belgian border was one reason why France refused last year to implement the Schengen treaty on lifting border controls.

There were, however, unusual aspects to the events of last Thursday and Friday which raised suspicions that something more than either money or drugs was involved. The crudeness of the "car bomb" and its placing suggested either extreme amateurishness or a symbolic gesture, possibly both.

Police also expressed amazement that the four occupants of the Roubaix house had apparently preferred to die in the flames rather than surrender.

The disclosure over the weekend that one of the dead men was a French convert to Islam has really set the alarm bells ringing, and the authorities — who were hoping that last year's fundamentalist violence had ended — will now be back on full anti-terrorist alert.

meeting on employment that began yesterday, speculation centred on the possibility of someone with a grudge against the police, possibly on the fringe of organised crime.

The next morning, however, it became evident that police had taken the "car bomb" very seriously indeed. Overnight they had staked out a house in the largely north African quarter of Roubaix, long regarded as a centre of the drugs trade and a "no-go area" for police. At dawn, they attempted to raid

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Coming home: A family mourns as the body of Bosnian army soldier Adnan Huskic, killed in 1993 in Sarajevo, is buried at Kovaci Photograph: Reuters

Bosnia village left behind the lines

Kovacevici — The men of this Muslim village, who share a surname and a pretty, shell-scarred village of 250 houses, held out against tank fire, rockets and howitzers. But by the stroke of a pen in Dayton, Ohio, they found themselves living on the wrong side of the line, the Serb-held side, to the mild embarrassment of their own peace negotiators.

The Sarajevo Serbs fled in their thousands rather than submit to the authority of the enemy, but the Muslims of Kovacevici are made of sterner stuff. "Though we are on the wrong side of the line, we will not leave," said Mirsad Kahrimanovic, lolling in the sun with his comrades, taking a break from the communal task of repairing electricity lines. "Why should we? This land is ours."

The view across the lightly wooded rolling green hills is interrupted by a bunker some 100 metres away — a Bosnian army position close to what was the front line with the rebel Serb army. "At one time there was a tank only five metres from that house," Mirsad, young and blond, said casually.

"But although their weapons almost reached the village, their soldiers never came near," added Muzijet Kahrimanovic, a kindly, studious young man. "They attacked with everything but the atomic bomb," said Ferid Kahrimanovic, a handsome 40-year-old who proves the

A stroke of the pen in Dayton put Muslim villagers in land held by Serbs — and they plan to stay. Emma Daly reports

exception to the rule that adult Bosnian villagers can look 20 years older than their age.

"The Serbs never came here during the war and we hope they won't in peacetime," said Muzijet who, like his friends, was wearing gumboots instead of the more familiar army boots. So far the authorities in Republika Srpska, the Serb-held entity in Bosnia, who should have assumed control of the area on 19 March, have declined to exercise their right to send in police patrols.

Kovacevici, whose pre-war population has halved to

around 500, might yet get away: a bilateral commission set up to negotiate the changes to the inelegantly named Inter-Entity Boundary Line meets again on Friday. The village and several others in similar positions may still be swapped for uninhabited territory elsewhere.

"We heard the news that we were on the wrong side of the line through Serb media," Mirsad explained. "Well," interjected Ferid, "when we first saw the [Dayton] map it looked as if the line was east of the village — but then we realised it was three or four kilometres out ...

the map on Serb TV [drawn to a scale of 1:300,000]. The Dayton negotiators made the same mistake. A Bosnian official, Mirza Hajric said yesterday: "When we came back [from Dayton] we had not seen the detailed map which was still being printed in the US. We got it 15 days later," Mr Hajric said. "It's one more proof that Dayton is not perfect."

Kovacevici, however, has no intention of howling to Dayton. "The Serb police will not come — they would not dare. If I was Serb I would not dare. I would be ashamed to come here."

This loyalty to their land underpins society in the Bosnian countryside. Refugees don't want to be given a house — they want their house. And those who have on have no intention of leaving, come what may.

What, they ask was Kovacevici known for before the war? "We had our mineral water," said Muzijet of a famous spring in a neighbouring village. "And good people," Sedahija added. "Bosnian souls," Muzijet concluded with a smile.

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GI to get missile interceptors

American troops in Bosnia are to be protected by a backpack device which uses radar waves to detect incoming artillery and mortar shells prematurely, writes Christopher Bellamy.

The United States Army intends to field the Shortstop electronic protection system to defend airfields, barracks, command posts and US forces on patrol later this year, according to Jane's Defence Weekly.

The lightest variant of the system weighs 25lb to 30lb and can be carried in a backpack. There are also 50lb and 100lb devices, which can be mounted

in vehicles or in static positions. Nine of these units, costing about \$60,000 (£39,400) each, will be delivered later this year.

The incoming shells which Shortstop is designed to counter use a reflected radar signal to make them explode about 50 feet above the ground.

The Americans discovered the idea by accident in the Second World War, during the Battle of the Bulge, when in their desperation the American troops fired everything they had — including very expensive anti-aircraft shells — at the German ground troops. The

shells exploded at the most lethal possible height above the ground. Shortstop captures the signal from the incoming shell and throws it back, tricking it into detonating as much as 800 metres (half a mile) from the target it is protecting.

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Ferid announced. "Nothing would happen to them but I don't think they will come," added Muzijet; and anyway, the locals said the only road into the rest of Republika Srpska was virtually destroyed in the war. "They can walk in if they want," said Fedahija Kahrimanovic — yet another cousin — with a smile.

But the men pointing to a deserted village on a hill a few hundred metres away said that local Serbs should return home. "Nobody has touched those houses and nobody will," said Fedahija said.

"The Serbs should also start working and living there, repairing their houses," added Mirsad, explaining that villagers who sought refuge in Tuzla during the war were coming home to Kovacevici too. "We love our village and want to stay here. We could have taken that [Serb] village but we didn't want it."

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Islam to lead



Baksheesh flavour to

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Democrats unite against Nigerian regime

Oslo (Agencies) — Nigerian pro-democracy groups said yesterday they had decided to join forces under an umbrella organisation to oppose Nigeria's military government.

At secret weekend talks in Oslo and Johannesburg, 13 organisations agreed to call themselves the United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN) and voted to strive peacefully to restore civilian rule in the west African country.

"We, the pro-democracy organisations... unanimously agreed to work together under a common platform, United Democratic Front of Nigeria, to effectively harness and facilitate our activities toward the

restoration of democracy in Nigeria," the UDFN said in a statement. The meeting was chaired in Oslo by Nigerian dissident Wole Soyinka who won the Nobel literature prize in 1986.

"The main point is that the military regime's opponents must speak with one voice, especially in political matters," Mr Soyinka told the Norwegian state radio network NRK.

Nigeria was thrown into political turmoil after the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida annulled a democratic presidential election in June 1993, won by Chief M K O Abiola.

The Babangida administration imposed an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan with General Sani Abacha as vice president. Gen Abacha seized full power in November 1993 and restored full military rule.

President-elect Abiola has been in detention since June 1994 on charges of treason for claiming his mandate.

"Abacha's rule has been characterised by institutionalised anarchy, corruption, economic decline and gross human rights abuses. Therefore, the limited sanctions imposed on Nigeria by the US and the European Union have not been effective in forcing Abacha and his regime to bow to the wishes of

the people... or to respect the basic standards of international behaviour," the UDFN statement said.

The group set out 10 resolutions rejecting what it called the Abacha dictatorship, calling for the immediate release of all political prisoners, the implementation of an oil embargo and for all governments and financial institutions to halt debt rescheduling and new loans to Nigeria.

The UDFN will reassemble in eight weeks "somewhere in west Africa" to write the group's formal constitution, said a spokesman at the Norwegian Council for Africa, which hosted the secret talks.

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Bureaucrats to take brunt of global UN cuts

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Tectering on the brink of bankruptcy and under intense pressure to reinvent itself, the United Nations yesterday took the wraps off plans to trim its staff levels by as much as 10 per cent and to curtail its worldwide programmes.

The job-cutting campaign will come as a hammer-blow to a UN workforce that is already afflicted by bitterness and rock-bottom morale. But it is likely to be welcomed by many member states, including Britain, as an overdue attempt at pruning a bureaucracy often labelled as hopelessly bloated and inefficient.

The redundancies will not directly affect the various semi-independent UN agencies, such as the World Health Organisation, but is focused on the roughly 10,000 employees of the UN's core secretariat, primarily in New York, but also in Geneva and Vienna and field offices around the world.

Briefing national ambassadors yesterday, Joseph Connor, the Under Secretary-General in charge of finances, detailed a three-pronged plan to trim staffing that would result in a vacancy rate inside the UN of 6.4 per cent, much higher than ever before. At least 800 posts will be emptied while retirement age rules will be strictly enforced and recruitment will be frozen.

Affected employees will face one of three possible fates: a transfer to another post inside

the UN; an offer of a buy-out equal to a year or more of their regular salary, depending on their length of service; or compulsory redundancy. The measures are to be completed over the next four months.

Mr Connor, who used to be a director of the accounting firm Price Waterhouse, conceded that life for UN employees was already hard. "This isn't a particularly good place to work any more," he commented. "Compensation for civil servants is falling behind, pressures are on and people work 70 hours a week here at the upper levels."

The last phase of the plan to be enacted will be the involuntary firings, when the opportunities for buy-outs and transfers have been exhausted. Officials said these were not likely before July and the final number involved was still uncertain, though it may be no more than one or two hundred.

The staffing reductions have been forced on the UN by a \$154m shortfall in the 1996-97 biennial budget recently approved by the General Assembly, compared with the draft proposed by the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In addition to shedding people, the UN will cut back what it offers in almost every sphere of its activities.

Details of those cuts are contained in documents that began circulating in New York yesterday. Departments slated for large cuts in operating resources include public information (by as much as \$8m), human rights (\$2.9m), Economic Commission

for Africa (\$4.7m), peace-keeping (\$6.4m) and political affairs (\$3.5m). The administration and management divisions of the UN will see their budget cut by as much as \$48m.

The impact of the cuts will be widespread and will be felt by almost anyone, including charities and governments, that overlaps with UN activities. There will be fewer UN conferences, fewer publications, fewer reports and fewer UN personnel around the world.

The atmosphere in the corridors of the UN's headquarters in New York, meanwhile, is more rose at best, even among those whose jobs may be secure. "There is despondency, because everyone is aware that everything that they are working on is going to be less effective," one senior official noted. "And everyone notices all the UN-hashing that goes on and that affects morale."

Many inside the bureaucracy also have little confidence that the opportunity will be taken to ensure that it is the deadwood that is jettisoned and not those who are genuinely talented and energetic. "That is an understatement," one source said. "I am sure they will get it wrong."

Politically speaking, however, some pruning of the UN staff is unavoidable. The US has made it plain that it will not come forward with the roughly \$1.5bn that it owes the organisation unless it proves its willingness to begin serious internal reforms, including some reduction in its size.

UNHCR challenges US refugee laws

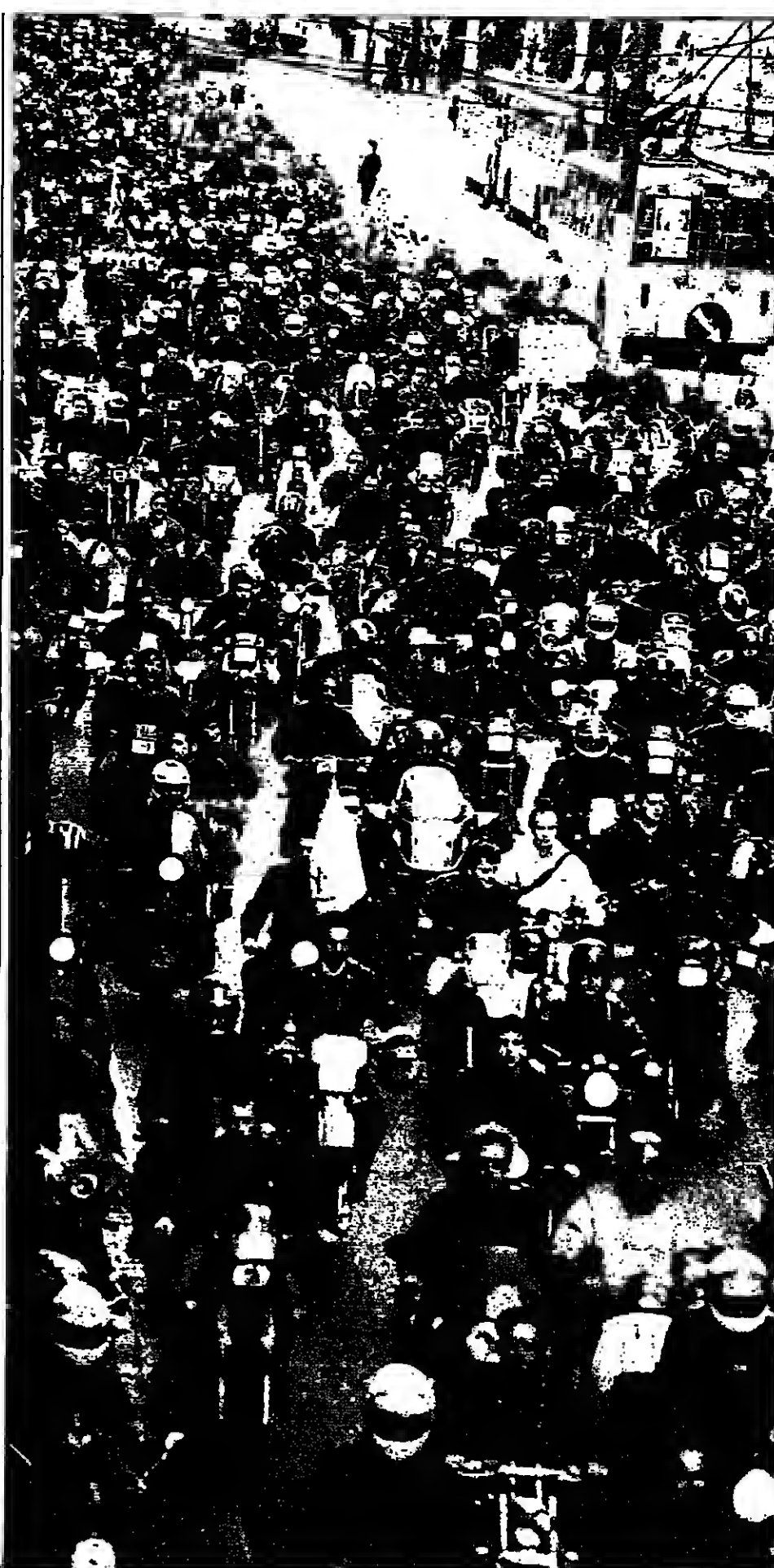
Geneva (Reuters) — The United Nations refugee agency, making a rare foray into United States domestic politics, said yesterday it would lobby "at the highest levels" against planned US laws it feared could deny asylum to genuine refugees.

A senior official with the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR), Dennis McNamara, said bills before the US Congress to curb illegal immigration could violate the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 additional protocol, to which the US is a party.

"Our concern is that we will have people removed to unsafe situations," Mr McNamara said.

One section of the proposals, due to go before the Senate in mid-April, and to which the UNHCR objects, would allow officials to deny potential refugees a judicial hearing if they did not establish in a preliminary interview a "credible fear of persecution" if they were forced to return home.



Greek gripes: Motorcycle enthusiasts protesting in Athens at new taxes on their vehicles and demanding better roads and services. Photograph: Reuters

international Japan adds its voice to scrapping ivory ban

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

The Japanese government is set to be drawn into a fresh environmental controversy about the banned trade in African ivory. Southern African nations have enlisted the support of Japan — traditionally a leading user of ivory — in talks aimed at amending the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites), which implemented a ban on sales of ivory in 1989.

In February, Japanese bureaucrats secretly met at the Mokuti Lodge in Namibia's Etosha National Park with officials from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Malawi, who collectively make up the South Africa Centre for the Ivory Trade (Saciit).

Delegates at the meeting, who included representatives of environmental NGOs and the British Department of the Environment, expect to reach a final decision in the next three months. But Japanese officials are quietly confident that they will lend their support to a lifting of the ivory ban, and the issue is likely to be raised at the next Cites convention in Zimbabwe in 1997.

Japan is one of the biggest ivory markets in the world, and almost 4,000 businesses rely on elephant tusks for the manufacture of jewellery, traditional musical instruments and personal seals, which are widely used in place of signatures. Since the ban, craftsmen have relied on stocks but only 160 tons remain and they will run out in five or six years.

At the same time, African countries are becoming increasingly frustrated by the ban which prevents them from selling off large stocks of tusks, legitimately gathered during official culls.

Half of elephants in Africa live outside the game reserves and, despite culling, they are often a great nuisance to farmers and inhabitants. African officials believe that the ban encourages

poaching by driving up the market price of ivory, and fostering an atmosphere in which elephants are regarded as a menace rather than a valuable resource. A controlled trade, they argue, would also generate much-needed funds for conservation projects.

"When the ban first came in, there was a decline in poaching, but all the indications are that the scale of the illegal trade is increasing," says Dr Malan Lindedeque, Namibia's deputy director of resource management, who set up the February meeting. "People have little reason to tolerate elephants — they are shot, ivory is exported, and there is no benefit to conservation or to society. Our intention is to make elephants as valuable as possible."

"Our principle is that a decision should be based upon scientific facts," says an official of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry. "The population of elephants in south Africa is very stable, and the south African nations should be allowed to reopen the trade for the sustainable use of ivory products. In Japan, the ivory industry is very traditional, and we regard it as an important part of Japanese culture."

Tokyo's Environment Agency is wary of raising the issue for fear of reinforcing Japan's reputation as an environmental violator. Japan uses the same arguments in support of its call for a resumption of commercial whaling, an issue which has generated international opprobrium. "There's not enough infrastructure in Africa to control an elephant industry," says David Butcher, the chief executive of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). "It's the most likely thing that would lead to elephant extinction. Anyone who said anything to the contrary is crazy."

Environmental groups also claim that controls in Japan are inadequate to prevent trade in illegal ivory and depend too much on the goodwill of the businesses involved.

Islamist to lead Sudanese parliament



Turabi: Called for national reconciliation

MOHAMED OSMAN
Associated Press

Khartoum — Hassan Turabi, the Islamic leader long considered the power behind Sudan's government, was unanimously chosen yesterday as the speaker of the newly elected parliament.

Turabi won a seat in the National Assembly during the presidential and parliamentary elections, held between 6 and 17 March, the country's first such polls since 1986. Before that, he held no official position in the government, despite guiding Sudan's efforts to create an Islamic society.

Sudan has poor relations

with most of its neighbours, including Egypt, which accuses Mr Turabi of being the mastermind behind Sudan's attempts to export radical Islam. The United Nations, meanwhile, is threatening sanctions over Sudan's failure to turn over three men wanted for the assassination attempt on the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, last June.

But Mr Turabi struck a conciliatory tone yesterday. Parliament's aim, he said, was a "reconciliation among all Sudanese people's forces and a rehabilitation of foreign relations that will seek dialogue, peace and co-operation with the world".

Dressed in white Sudanese robe and head-dress, he was nominated by the former speaker of the transitional National Assembly, which was dissolved after the elections. His nomination was opposed by the 400 members of parliament.

All but one of the candidates chosen for parliament were government supporters. Lt Gen Omar el-Bashir, who led the 1989 coup that brought the Islamic fundamentalist government to power, was elected president in a vote boycotted by opposition groups.

He was sworn in yesterday and promised that his goal would be to end Sudan's 13-year civil war.

Baksheesh brings exotic flavour to Paris of East

Bucharest — It may not be the glittering West, but as far as Ahmed Mohammed is concerned, its streets are paved with gold. Adjusting his fez, he smiles as Romanians cast their hungry eyes over his market stall hearing sweets, chocolates, cheap perfumes and coffee.

The prices for bulk purchases are all marked but if they want to haggle, he will oblige. "After so many years of deprivation, Romanians cannot get enough of these goods," he says. Like many traders in the Flori market on the city outskirts, Mr Mohammed is from Iraq, not a country offering the brightest prospects for would-be entrepreneurs. He is joined by a colourful array of like-minded merchants from Syria and Lebanon and as far afield as China.

Since the overthrow of Communism, Bucharest has become a Mecca for Arabs and Asians, tempted by easy visas and demand for the cheap imported goods in which they specialise.

To some extent they also feel at home. "This country is not far from the Orient but it is somewhere between the two," says Mr Mohammed, side-stepping a trolley of "Arabic" washing-powder bearing Arabic inscriptions. "There is a fluctuation between the white market and the black market. Here

BUCHAREST DAYS

we can thrive." An Egyptian importer put it more succinctly: "This is a land of baksheesh in a European setting."

Certainly the rules governing economic life in Romania today are unclear, with backrooms providing the setting for many a money transaction and bribery forming an almost indispensable part of business activity. Under the Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanians were denied almost all consumer goods and initiative was extinguished. For the foreign traders who got on the bandwagon first, therefore, the country provided rich pickings, with the most successful moving from street stalls and kiosks to open proper businesses, factories and restaurants.

"We have opportunities here that are simply not open to us in Western Europe," says Mr Mohammed, who plans to open a chocolate factory. "Of course we would prefer to be operating out of Germany or Sweden but there is no way those countries would ever accept us."

Under Ceausescu, Romania maintained strong ties with the Arab world and, to Moscow's annoyance, with China and North Korea. Thousands of

foreign students were invited to Romanian universities and cultural exchange programmes were strengthened.

In the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, however, most Romanians hoped the country would turn West and that the West would show interest in Romania. Much was made of its cultural ties to France, its linguistic affinities, penchant for croissants (albeit stodgy ones) and even architectural echoes (Bucharest was known as the Paris of the East before the war and still boasts a replica Arc de Triomphe).

But for all the declarations of support and joy at the overthrow of Ceausescu, few Western countries and companies chose to invest in Romania, most opting for the more prosperous Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland. "Of course we would prefer to be doing business with West Europeans but they never really came," said Dan Bordea, a market-stall trader who had gone to the Flori to stock up on cigarettes at \$6 (£4) a time for cartons of 200. "The Arabs and Asians filled a gap. And personally, I enjoy doing business with them."

Not all Romanians share his

sentiment and some feel the sort of resentment usually reserved for the country's large Gypsy community.

Last year Major Florin Ionescu of the Bucharest police blamed a rise in crime on the presence of so many foreign traders. "They are not really businessmen but are more like explorers digging for gold," he said. "Take the Chinese. They will come here with five shirts and leave two months later with \$10,000 stuffed in a suitcase."

Nicolae Vacaroiu, the Prime Minister, also claims the Arabs and Asians are little more than "speculators and smugglers" whose presence in the country has had a negative impact. Rather than outlawing them, however, he predicts that they will be squeezed out of the market as the country's economy reforms and matures.

In the Flori market, meanwhile, business is thriving. "Some people here think that we Arabs are stealing money from Romanians but everything we make is only through our business," says Ali, another Iraqi trader. "The truth is that the Romanians don't really like us here but they do like our goods — and especially our cheap prices."

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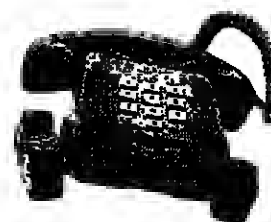
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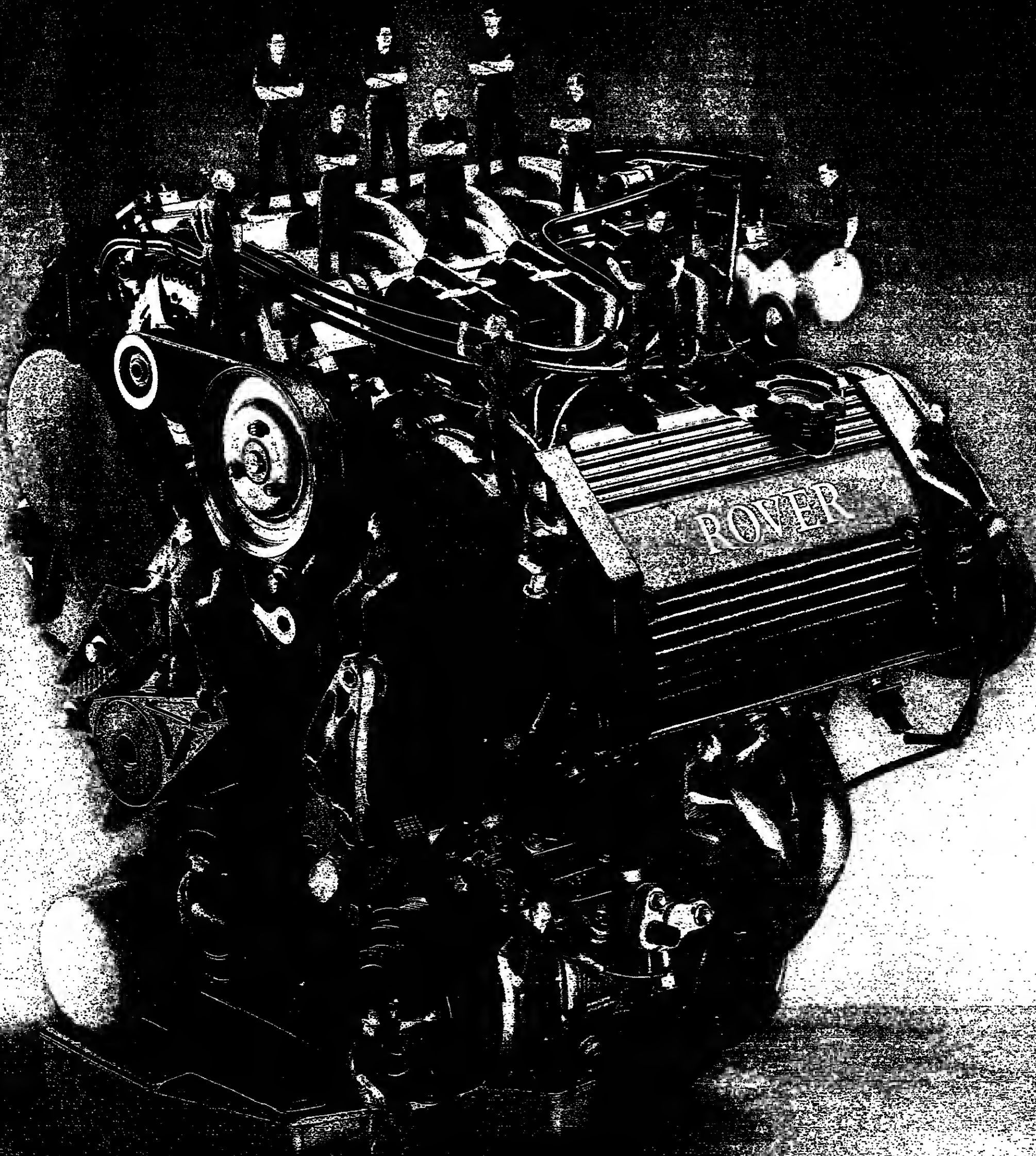
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IND

Jail dramas: Prison chief and TV crew held in Brazil ■ Woman judge seized in Argentina



High life: Inmates at Olmos prison, near Buenos Aires, take to the roof in a protest over conditions by 5,000 prisoners across Argentina. Photograph: Enrique Marcarian/Reuters

Siege convicts demand top guns

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

To your average hostage-holding prisoner, the negotiators' offer might not have appeared too bad. Cash, getaway cars, guns and ammunition to ensure a clean getaway.

The two dozen Brazilian prisoners holding hostages in a jail south-west of Brasilia, however, were not satisfied. They demanded weapons more powerful than the 38 pistols they were offered and souped-up cars able to outrun police pursuers.

The demands of the prisoners at the Agro-industrial penitentiary in Aparecida de Goiania have led to a tense

stand-off and fears of a massacre if police move in. The inmates were yesterday still holding 33 hostages, including the prison director and a television crew, whom they seized during an inspection tour last Thursday.

The hostages were said to be surrounded by canisters of cooking oil, which the inmates were threatening to blow up.

Led by one of Brazil's best-known criminals, 25-year-old kidnapper Leonardo Pareja, the inmates took advantage of the inspection to grab hostages including prison director Nicola Limongi, local officials, police officers and the television crew. Although the inspection

was to check reports of overcrowding — there were almost 1,000 prisoners in the jail instead of its 450 capacity — the hostage-takers' aim appeared to be simply to escape. The vast majority of the inmates did not take part and have been moved.

In full view of cameras, the hostage-takers staged a football match in the prison yard on Sunday, running around the pitch with pistols in their hands.

In an emotional appeal to police not to attack, Mr Limongi appeared on a prison wall with a pistol trained on him by an inmate. "Brazil doesn't need another Carandiru," he shouted, a reference to a 1992 massacre of more than 100 inmates after

a prison riot in Sao Paulo. When the prisoner fired a shot in the air, watched by millions on live television, the prison director shouted "for the love of God" and sobbed as he asked his family to "forgive me for my mistakes". Looking on from police lines, his son shouted "have strength dad, I love you".

After a negotiating team met Pareja on Saturday, the authorities agreed to give the prisoners five cars, pistols, ammunition and about \$25,000 in cash in return for the release of 18 hostages. The five remaining hostages would have left with the prisoners, one hostage in each car.

Pareja then demanded faster

cars and "state of the art weaponry" and said that he would not talk again until today. Some police officers at the scene implied that the drama could be over by then but would not say why.

Meanwhile, four separate prison riots were reported in Argentina at the weekend after a failed break-out at one of the jail's. A woman judge who had tried to negotiate was among 15 hostages being held at the Sierra Chica prison near the town of Alavaria.

Inmates were demanding faster treatment of their cases, better conditions and greater visiting rights. The three other riots appeared to be in solidarity

with the Sierra Chica rebellion. Like Sierra Chica, all were in Buenos Aires province.

Judge Maria Malere and her secretary were captured on Saturday when they went to speak with prisoners who had overpowered guards after a failed mass break-out.

The Sierra Chica prisoners were holding 10 wardens and three evangelical preachers. They handed over demands, including more relaxed visiting rules.

Relatives of the prisoners, mostly women, began gathering outside Sierra Chica early on Sunday and some were allowed briefly through the heavily armed cordon of guards.

IN BRIEF

Peres to hold peace referendum

Jerusalem — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said yesterday that he would hold a referendum on any final peace agreement with the Palestinians. His pledge appeared aimed at undecided voters in forthcoming elections who fear that he would make too many concessions to the Palestinians.

Negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the future of 144 Jewish settlements, are to begin in May. Mr Peres was speaking as he left for a visit to Oman, the second by an Israeli Premier to the Gulf Arab state in less than two years.

Algiers closes Spanish news bureau

Madrid — The Spanish newspaper *El Pais* said yesterday that Algeria had withdrawn its Algerian correspondent's accreditation, effectively closing the newspaper's bureau. *El Pais* said the Algerian foreign ministry gave no official explanation but that its press chief told the newspaper's correspondent Ferran Sales the government disliked his coverage and resented the fact that he was also reporting on Morocco.

Liberals withdraw support from Yeltsin

Moscow — Five major figures in Russia's liberal movement, including human-rights activists Sergei Kovalyov and Yelena Bonner, said yesterday they would not support President Boris Yeltsin's re-election bid but would back liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky (right), currently an outsider, in the presidential election. Their declaration, and the creation of a public committee to back Mr Yavlinsky, was a setback for Mr Yeltsin.



Tehran must condemn terrorism, says EU

Rome — A European Union delegation will visit Tehran today to tell the Iranian government that the future of its dialogue with Europe depends on a firm condemnation of terrorism, diplomats said yesterday. The *Irish* of senior officials from Italy, Spain and Ireland hoped to continue to Libya.

UFO spotted near Saudi oil refinery

Dubai — An unidentified flying object was sighted last week in Saudi Arabia's oil-producing eastern region, a Saudi newspaper reported yesterday. "Flying saucer illuminates Jubail," said the headline of a story in *al-Ekhsadih*. The story said that the Thursday night sighting was reported by a group of people who were camping north of the Gulf coast city of Jubail, site of the kingdom's second-largest oil refinery.

200 feared dead in Haiti ferry disaster

Port-au-Prince — About 200 people were feared dead after an overcrowded ferry sank off the coast of Haiti on Thursday. Radio Haiti Inter reported yesterday. The ferry *Lavi Wonn* went down off Les Irois, a coastal town in south-west Haiti, the report said. Poor communications in rural Haiti were said to have delayed news of the disaster from reaching the capital until yesterday.

Russia plays fool with diamond grenade

Moscow — A Moscow military factory has developed a diamond-studded grenade so that Russia's newly-rich gangster class can send their enemies to oblivion in style. At least, so said the normally staid *Itar-Tass* news agency. "The use of such a grenade will leave your one-time rival in a sea of beautiful sparkling gems, rather than in a pool of blood," the hoax story said.

Lost contact with Cambodian kidnappers

Phnom Penh, Cambodia — Authorities have failed to regain contact with the kidnappers of a British land-mine removal expert and his Cambodian interpreter, an official said yesterday. Christopher Howes, 36, and Houn Hounth, 30, were working for the British-based Mines Advisory Group when they were seized by a group of armed men on March 26. They were last seen alive last Wednesday by intermediaries for the government.

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obituaries/gazette

Dante Giacosa

In his career Dante Giacosa spanned the golden age of motor manufacture. As the leading design engineer of Fiat from 1946 to 1970 he was effectively head of all Fiat car projects and, in that more individualistic age, was one of a handful of men around the world who could effectively control the output of a great car company. "Giacosa made Fiat what it is today," says Paolo Cantarella, the current managing director of Fiat Auto.

Giacosa joined Fiat in 1926. In the studios of the magnificent new Lingotto factory in Turin Giacosa learned engine design from the famous older Fiat designers such as Tranquillo Zerbi and by 1932 moved in to the aero-engine section. Giacosa had an innate sensitivity and tact and noted that "the draughtsmen, who were older than I was and the mainstay of the section, began to respect my abilities without feeling put out by the fact that I had an engineering degree".

The identification of Giacosa with a peculiarly Italian style of popular car began with a request in 1929 from Senator Giovanni Agnelli, co-founder of the Fiat company (and grandfather of the present head, Gianni) to design an economy car that would sell for 5,000 lire.

This was the period when economical small cars were being developed in all the industrialised European countries. Giacosa's new 500cc vehicle, originally called the Zeta A, first ran in 1934. It was a triumph of engineering subtlety, squeezing a four-cylinder engine and a body which could take two adults and two children into just over three metres' length.

The tiny car also had independent suspension and out-handled many larger contemporaries. The radiator was squeezed in behind the engine for compactness which allowed a sharply sloping nose. The whole thing looked rather like a clockwork mouse and the Italians loved it and called it "Topolino" (the Italian name for Mickey Mouse).

During the Second World War Giacosa worked again on aero engines but also began planning a post-war range of economy cars. However, when the war in Italy ended he became involved in what seems, in the light of his commitment to utilitarian vehicles, a surprisingly

frivolous project – the Cisitalia racing car – and although tiny numbers were built it was, however, an important achievement. Cisitalia was the brainwave of a mercurial entrepreneur, Piero Dusio, then the president of the Juventus football club. He wanted a small racing car to establish a standard low-cost formula for post-war competition.

Giacosa who, like many then at Fiat, had no definite duties, was allowed to do the design work. He adapted the standard Fiat 1100cc engine and various Topolino suspension parts with a light and elegant tubular chassis which surprised some colleagues, one remarking in dialect, "Ngenere! che curage... quel telaio in tubi" ("Engineer, what a nerve – that chassis made of tubes"). The sight of a squadron of these beautiful little single-seat racers, completed amidst post-war dereliction, lifted Italian self-respect when they raced at Valentino Park in Turin in 1946, piloted by pre-war aces like Tazio Nuvolari, Piero Taruffi and Louis Chiron and represented a symbolic and psychological regeneration for Turin.

More important than the single-seat racer was the stylish Cisitalia coupé. With a streamlined sports-car body "Pinin" Farina clothed Giacosa's drivetrain with an almost perfect form. This defined the post-war Italian line in automobile design which was to make Turin a global centre for design (an example is displayed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York).

Returning to mainstream automotive work Giacosa started rebuilding the whole Fiat range. However, he is best remembered for the finest cars he built, because they are such a marvel of design integration. The Fiat 600, launched in 1955, was intended to repeat the trick he had pulled off with the Topolino, but this time four adults could be seated.

To gain even greater compression of the engine and drive-train Giacosa opted to condense them behind the passenger compartment and even used the engine radiator fan to blow warm air forward for heating. The tiny vehicle was exactly what Italy needed in the years of recovery for it combined extraordinary economy with the ability to fit into tiny Ital-

ian urban spaces. Some 2½ million were built.

There followed an even smaller car, the Nova Cinquecento (launched in 1957), the conceptual successor to the Topolino, in which extraordinary steps were taken to refine the use of steel and save materials.

What, from the perspective of the 1990s, seems fascinating in these tiny utilitarian cars is also how they expressed a clear nationality. The Cinquecento was Italian as the Morris Minor was British – a luxury of cultural identity which has been extinguished by design convergence and globalisation.

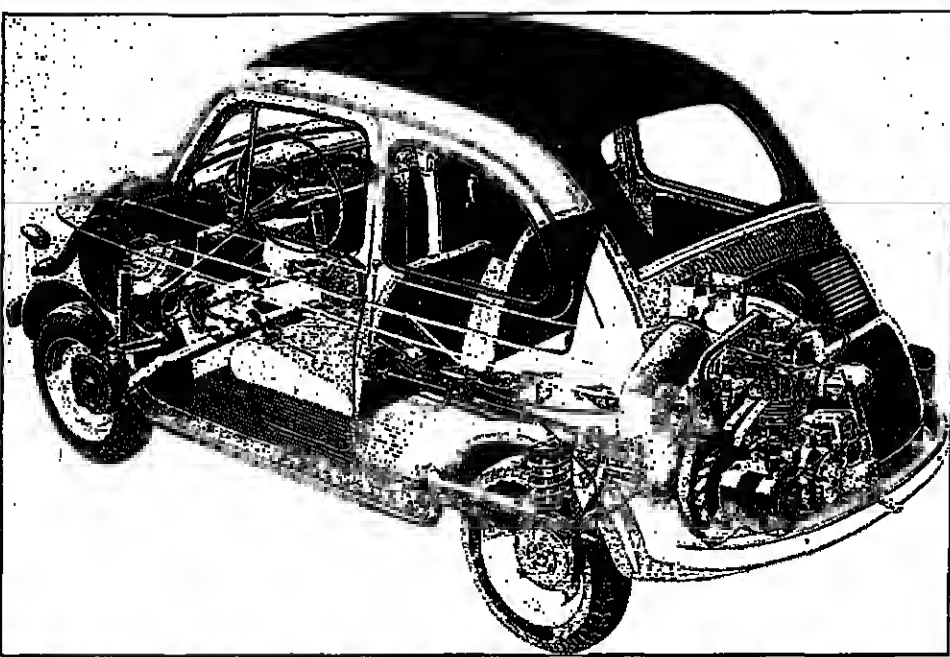
Not all Giacosa's projects were utilitarian. There was also an intriguing 8-cylinder sports car (the 1952 8V) and an experimental gas turbine car, which expressed the expansiveness of the regenerating Fiat Company. In England the Rover company sawed the roof off an "Auntie" Rover when it wanted a test-vehicle for the new power plant. Fiat, instead, built a new car with fabulous Buck Rogers styling, huge fins and a tail-pipe which screamed "Jet".

Giacosa, like Alec Issigonis, came at a certain moment in the evolution of industrial organisation and was one of the last designers who could virtually dictate the whole progress of a car himself; indeed he said, "I have never considered it necessary to discuss projects in meetings with a number of other people during the phase of conception and design." In addition he was in effect head of all Fiat auto projects from 1946 to 1970, an extraordinarily long period in control of the design of a major car company.

Nevertheless, he was intensely modest and thoughtful about industrial culture, noting in his fascinating account *Forty Years of Design with Fiat* (1979): "Discipline is a spontaneous emanation of culture and upbringing... without culture and hence discipline there can never be freedom." His remarkable qualities earned him the deepest respect at Fiat and in Turin and throughout the car industry.

Andrew Nahum

Dante Giacosa, engineering designer: born Rome 3 January 1905; died Turin 31 March 1996.



Giacosa, top, with the Fiat 'Topolino' and, above, its successor, the 1957 Nova Cinquecento

S. Schoenbaum

Sam Schoenbaum was one of the heroes of Shakespeare scholarship, yet his voluminous writings can be seen as preliminary studies for a culminating book that his long last illness was to prevent him from writing. He wanted to write a major biography of Shakespeare and, like E.K. Chambers before him, he set about the task by planning a series of preparatory volumes.

Early works on Thomas Middleton (*Middleton's Tragedies: a critical study*, 1955) and on problems of attribution in Elizabethan dramatic authorship (*Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship*, 1966), and a revision (1964) of Alfred Harbage's *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700*, laid the groundwork. He turned directly to Shakespeare, in the masterly *Shakespeare's Lives* (1970, revised 1994), an encyclopaedic but immensely entertaining study of earlier investigations into Shakespeare's biography which includes a long section on what he called "Deviations" – attempts to demonstrate that Shakespeare did not write his works.

Next came *William Shakespeare: a Documentary Life* (1974), a meticulous and splendidly produced investigation of the primary materials accompanied by photocopies of all the relevant documents which he went to great pains to examine himself, wherever they were located. This was supplemented by a no less impressive companion volume, *William Shakespeare: records and images* (1981). On the title-pages of these, as of all his works, he appears as "S. Schoenbaum"; he had an aversion to the use of any longer form of his name in print.

In the meantime had appeared a compact version (1977) of the *Documentary Life*. Although he saw this only as the last stage in the process of limbering up for the comprehensive biography that would have crowned his achievement, it remains the fullest, most scholarly, and most readable account of what is known about Shakespeare's life. Like all Schoenbaum's mature work it is characterised by learning lightly borne, and by a prose style that combines high intelligence with a marvellous play of ironical wit.

All this was achieved along with a busy career as a university teacher – mainly at Northwestern University and later at

the University of Maryland, where he was Distinguished Professor of Renaissance Studies; as an editor, as a contributor to learned journals, and as a reviewer of books, theatre, and cinema, in which he took a keen interest.

Sam Schoenbaum's dedication to scholarship never stood in the way of his enjoyment of the good things of life. In great demand as a speaker, he travelled extensively, usually accompanied by his wife, Marilyn; he liked to recall that their first date had been at a performance of *Othello* starring Paul Robeson. He enjoyed good wine, food (cooking it as well as eating it), and restaurants. He was gregarious and made friends easily, he always had time for a gossip, he liked to amuse, he was kindly to young and old; there was no malice in him. On the jacket of the *Documentary Life* he is portrayed, not uncharacteristically, holding a glass of brandy. He once told me with puzzled ill feeling, this had caused much ill feeling. His worldly success provoked envy in some of his colleagues, but he took great pleasure in his friends' successes, and was unfailingly generous in criticism.

It must be over 10 years now since multiple sclerosis started to slow Schoenbaum down and to reduce his output. Cancer was to be added. He continued to work, but the big book on which he had set his sights never came into being. I last saw him in Washington two years ago, already bedridden and wraith-like, but patient in affliction and tended with selfless devotion by his wife. A volume of essays planned to celebrate his achievements is about to be published; it will, as all who have contributed feared it might, turn out to be a tribute to his memory.

Stanley Wells

Samuel Schoenbaum, English scholar: born New York 6 March 1927; staff, Northwestern University 1953-75, Franklin Bliss Snyder Professor of English Literature 1971-75; Visiting Professor, King's College London 1961; Distinguished Professor of English, City University of New York 1975-76; Distinguished Professor of Renaissance Literature, University of Maryland 1976-93; Director, Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies 1981-96; married 1946 Marilyn Turk; died Washington DC 27 March 1996.

Hugh Falkus

In 1984 Hugh Falkus published *Salmon Fishing*, the book that has become the bible for a generation of anglers. Together with his earlier *Sea Trout Fishing* (1962), this has brought the adventure of gamefishing into the lives of thousands of enthusiasts. Falkus's fishing books, which also include *Freshwater Fishing* (co-written with Fred Buller, 1975), have been in print non-stop since they were published and seem set to remain in print for ever. They are the fruit of many years of hard fishing, long observation and keen experiment.

Falkus was a hunter who studied his prey with unflinching zeal. He worked harder, longer, more intensively, than any angling writer I have known, and took great pains over every page. He would sit up half the night to make one perfect sentence. Between huge draughts of whisky he applied the most

formidable concentration. He would often fish all night and work all day, leaving his companions pole-axed.

In a career of non-stop action, he was first a Spitfire pilot in the Second World War. Shot down over France and imprisoned for four years, he was a constant menace to his jailers and in one camp famously captured and censored the Kommandant's favourite cat. After the war, he found work as an actor and scriptwriter at the BBC. He began making films with the BBC Natural History Unit and achieved an important success with *Signals for Survival* (1968), a documentary made with the Nobel prizewinning behaviourist Niko Tinbergen about communication between seagulls. This superb film won the Italia Prize the following year and was Falkus's proudest achievement. The prizewinner's certificate occupied a prime

site, above his desk, in the study of his Cumbrian home. Falkus's wildlife films included *Tender Trap* (1974), about carnivorous plants, *The Riddle of the Rook* (1975), and *The Signifiers* (1964). When the BBC Natural History Unit eventually moved further afield in its quest for new films than Falkus was willing to travel, he switched to a more autobiographical mode with his *Self-Portrait of a Happy Man* (1976), filmed in the Esk valley, where he lived for 40 years. This he followed with *Salmo the Leaper* (1977) and his last film, set in Scotland, *Highland Story* (1979).

Falkus's films are crafted with great skill. Once, during the making of *Salmo the Leaper*, I happened to be on the river bank with the camera crew when Falkus was setting up a short sequence showing the passage of a spinning lure through the water. The cam-

eraman was submerged, filming the lure as it was cast in front of him. After an hour of this I got bored and wandered away upstream. Returning two hours later, I found the team in the same position and the unfortunate sunken cameraman still at his task. That scene lasts a few seconds in the finished film, but Falkus had to get it just right.

I met him in 1976, following publication of the revised edition of *Sea Trout Fishing*. In the text of this most inspiring of all fishing books, he referred to the value of what he called "nature detective work" in understanding animal behaviour. I suggested there might be a book in that idea, and in 1978 *Nature Detective* appeared. I took Falkus to the studios at Pebble Mill in Birmingham for a live television appearance. In the course of his interview, with the timing of a born showman, he suddenly hrought from his

pocket the wing of a tawny owl and explained how the feathers were constructed to allow the bird to glide silently upon its prey. Then he produced the foot of a peregrine falcon and showed its killer thumb talon to the camera. After he had over-run by several minutes, the producer managed to switch to the next item, but no, there burst out all round the studio loud and prolonged applause from the audience as Falkus strode to the anteroom. In there, the telephones started ringing. Who was the man with the owl's wing, and where could one get his book? It was his first hit. With the proceeds he built a sumptuous garage.

Apart from fishing, he was a great wildfowler, having started as a boy on the Essex marshes with his father as instructor. He wrote a charming book about his boyhood, *The Stolen Years* (1965), which evokes the

joys of his youth spent roaming mudflats, reedbeds and shorelines, hunting, fishing and sailing. In his final period, he taught fly-casting, becoming the top instructor in the country for those who could stand the pace. His last book, *Speycasting* (1994), is the result of his experience as a teacher. He was already ill and often in pain while the book was in preparation, but stuck to the job with immense courage.

David Burnett

Hugh Edward Lance Falkus, fisherman, naturalist, writer, filmmaker: born 15 May 1917; married 1939 Doris Walter (one son, one daughter, and one son deceased: marriage dissolved); 1951 Diana Vaughan (deceased), thirdly Lady Margaret Vane-Tempest-Stewart (marriage dissolved); 1957 Kathleen Armstrong (died Ravenglass, Cumbria 30 March 1996).



Hard fishing: Falkus demonstrates a reel holder – an illustration to his book *Speycasting*: a new technique (Excellent Press, 1994)

Life returns to the world and to us

Arguments for Easter

Kieron Conry, of the Catholic Media Office, continues our series of meditations for Holy Week with a consideration of the meanings concealed by the timing of the festival.

for which Moses had asked Pharaoh's permission.

The word "Passover" is often taken to refer to the angel of God "passing over" the children of Israel and visiting the houses of the Egyptians. The Jewish word *pesach* does contain the idea of passing or leaping over. But, curiously, it also means "to jump" or "spring". Passover, then, probably refers to the spring of the year as to the flight of the angel. The word "spring" itself is related to the idea of "bursting out", an image that is easily connected to the tremendous energy of this time of year.

The origins of the Jewish people seem to have been, first, nomadic. They depended on their flocks for their livelihood. Later they appear to have settled down and become farmers, raising crops and tending livestock. Each spring was crucial, then, for their future. It would tell them if the flocks were breeding and if the crop was successful. When the earth did provide them with food for the coming year the people thanked God, and offered back

to him some of what he had given. A lamb would be taken from the flock and bread made with the new wheat.

Passover is a celebration of the return of life in spring after the apparent death of the earth in winter. Like the Christian Easter, it is rooted very strongly in the earth. It is not clear why it is celebrated on the night when the moon is full. When Moses and the people wanted to go out into the desert to celebrate, however, they wanted to go out at night. Passover is an evening meal. Although it may appear that there was a purely practical reason for wanting the light of a full moon, presumably there is more to it than this. A long way back in the origins of this celebration, the moon must have made a much more powerful impact on people's consciousness as they tried to find their place under a vast and mysterious sky.

The images of Easter have the power of this cosmic drama. Christ is buried in the earth, and for the disciples at the time the promise of a spring seemed empty. It was as if the crops had failed and the flock not bred. Where was life to come from now?

The accounts of the Resurrection in the Gospels do not attempt to describe the event itself. This would be impossible. They talk instead about the women finding the empty tomb. All the Gospels make the point that it is early in the morning on the first day of the week. Our own word "Easter" surely refers to the place where the sun rises. We celebrate the Resurrection of the Son with the rising of the sun. It is a new day, and the spring of a new year. It is a dramatic picture of the beginning of new life.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

MEMORIAL SERVICES

MANFIELD: A service of thanksgiving for the life of Peter Mansfield will be held at St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, London SW7, on Thursday 9 May at 2.00pm. Enquiries to 0171-373 8414.

Announcements for Deaths, Births, Marriages, and Deaths. Memorial services, wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £2.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (for hand) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen visits HRH Princess Christina's Hospital, Windsor, Berkshire. The Prince of Wales visits the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund's new Day Centre, Macmillan House, Bishop Auckland, County Durham; visits Sunderland University's St Peter's Campus, Sunderland; and visits the Vice-President, the National Trust, visits Gribble, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and as President, Princess in the Community, visits the Ford and Penryrhon Community College, Sunderland; and visits West. Princess Alexandra attends a performance of the St John Passion by the Children of St John's Smith Square, London SW1.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, (1pm). 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Grenadier Guards.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr C. H. G. Glyn and Miss C. Agnew. The engagement is announced between Captain, son of Mr James Glyn, of Tawau, North Borneo, and Mrs Lucinda Glyn, of London SW10, and Christine, daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Agnew, of Myrtlefield Park, Belfast.

Birthdays

Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, Second Sea Lord, 83; Sir Jack Brabham, racing driver, 70; Sir Graham Bright MP, 54; Mr Linford Christie, athlete, 36; Mr Richard Collinge, cricketer, 50; Sir Richard Dobbs, former Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim, 77; Mr George MacDonald Fraser, writer, 71; Mr Paul Gambaccini, broadcaster, 47; Miss Catherine Gaskin, romantic novelist, 67; Mr Brian Glover, actor, 62; Mrs Myra Greco, director of the East European Partnership, VSO, 58; Mr Raymond Gubby, concert promoter, 50; Sir Alec Guinness, actor, 82; The Right Rev Richard Hawkins, Bishop of Crediton, 57; Mr Barry Hills, racehorse trainer, 59; Sir Ian Hunter, impresario, 77; Miss Penelope Keith, actress, 56; Sir Peter Middleton, a deputy chairman, Barclays Bank, 62; Maj-Gen Christopher Popham, former director, British Atlantic Commission, 69; Mr Michael Rizzello, sculptor and coin designer, 70; Sir Denis Rooke, former chairman, British Gas, 72; Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Thompson, 65; Miss Sue Townsend, writer, 50.

Anniversaries

Births: Hans Christian Andersen, author, 1805; William Holman Hunt, painter, 1827; Emile-Edouard

Charles-Antoine Zola, novelist, 1840; Max Ernst, painter and sculptor, 1891. Deaths: Vibhaji Ranjitsinghi, Maharaja of Nawangan, cricketer, 1933; Cecil Scott Forester, novelist, 1966; Georges-Jean Raymond Pompidou, President of France, 1974. On this day, the Royal Society was granted its Charter, 1663; Argentina invaded and captured the Falkland Islands, 1982. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Apollonia and Theodosia, St Francis of Paola, St John Payne, St Mary of Egypt, St Nicetas or Nizier of Lyons and St Zosimus.

Lectures

National Gallery: Neil MacGregor, Nicholas Penny, Colin Wiggins, "Re-imagining the Past", 1pm. RIBA Architecture Centre, London W1: Professor Hiroyuki Suzuki, "Young Japanese Architects", 6.30pm. Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, London N6: Gillian Russell and Theo Richmond, "Quests: the search for lost worlds", 7.45pm.

Baroness Faithfull

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Baroness Faithfull will take place in St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, at noon on Thursday 6 June. Those wishing to attend are requested to apply for tickets to: The Record Secretary, Room 6, 1 Little Cloister, Westminster Abbey, London SW1P 3PL, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Tickets will be posted on 24 May.

Dinners

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, held a dinner yesterday at 1 Carlton Gardens,

London SW1, in honour of Dr Klaus Kinkel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Chatham Dining Club

Mr Harry Vanevy was in the chair at a meeting of the Chatham Dining Club held yesterday evening at St Ermin's Hotel, London SW1. Mr David Trimble MP was the principal guest.

Foundation for Science and Technology

Lord Butterworth was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening by the Foundation for Science and Technology at the Royal Society, London W1. Professor Sir Robert May introduced the evening on "Younger Scientists and Engineers. It's Their Future". Dr Tracey Turner, Dr Mark Clived, Dr Richard Anderson, Mr Adrian Colyer, Ms Alexandra Walker and Dr Steve Young also spoke.

Royal Over-Seas League

Mr Tony Hams, environmental adviser to the Local Government Management Board, was the guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, St James's, London SW1. His subject was "Local Agenda 21 – Community Activism". Mrs Mairi Radcliffe presided.

British Library

The Second Annual Douglas Bryant Lecture, which was to have been held on 2 April, has had to be cancelled due to the withdrawal of the speaker, Dr James Billington. The British Library apologises for the short notice of this change, and regrets any inconvenience caused. For further in-

formation, please contact the British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB.

The riddle of the shifting date of Easter continues to puzzle and even annoy people. Would it not be better if Easter were always 1 April or (if we have to keep it on a Sunday) the first Sunday of that month? Can we not fix the date, as we do at Christmas?

In fact the date of Easter is set so that the seasons collaborate in our worship. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. This means that, as the days are already longer than the nights and getting longer, spring is with us and the year is changing. It is changing quite visibly all around us. The change is probably most visible in the countryside, but even in the towns there are green shoots on trees and plants pushing through the earth. The celebration of Easter is very much tied in with what is happening in nature. The words and images we use in Easter worship reflect the changing of the seasons.

When he first approaches the Pharaoh (Exodus 11), Moses asks that the people be allowed to go out into the wilderness to "keep a feast" in honour of God. The Pharaoh refuses, and the battle of wills goes on until the destroying angel of God sweeps through Egypt, killing all the firstborn.

The children of Israel are spared because they have painted their doors, as they were told to do by God, with the blood of the lamb they have sacrificed. They survive, hurriedly eat their Passover supper and escape through the Red Sea into freedom. Passover, however, cannot refer simply to the night of the escape from Egypt, but must also refer to something that had been happening already, the celebration

APR 2 1996

Edward Heath, the then prime minister leading the pro-Europe Campaign in 1975

	Switzerland	Rest of Europe	Near East	Asia	N and S America	Australia and N Zealand	Total
Up to 1900	57	11	—	—	3	—	71
1901-10	12	2	—	—	—	4	18
1911-20	15	6	—	—	3	5	29
1921-30	28	8	1	—	2	6	45
1931-40	23	17	—	—	7	6	53
1941-50	21	15	1	1	3	11	52
1951-60	32	6	8	5	3	5	59
1961-70	30	14	18	4	4	7	77
1971-80	87	18	36	14	8	14	177
1981-90	76	33	24	6	10	4	153
1991-93	33	19	5	—	6	2	65
Total	414	149	93	30	49	64	799

HOW BRITAIN WOULD VOTE

Do you think there should or should not be a referendum on whether the pound sterling should be part of a single European currency?

Should be a referendum 71%
Should not be a referendum 21%
No opinion/don't know 8%

If you had to do so tomorrow?
Yes 31%
No 69%

And if there were a referendum on whether or not Britain should be part of a single European currency, how would you vote?

Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
For a single currency	29%	The arguments for	18%
Against a single currency	60%	The arguments against	46%
No opinion/don't know	11%	Don't know	36%

Eagle Eye

Yes. With another 90 per cent it could be Reading versus Real Madrid in the Millennium European Cup ... Or Division Three and a misshapen corner flag.

Press awards, minus the press

Eagle Eye's British Press Awards part 2: Following yesterday's award to the *Financial Times* for forgetting to get any of their entries in on time, I have one more booby prize to hand out. Guests at the awards ceremony may have noticed there was no table for the *Observer*. The cause of this oversight – and winner of our prize – is the *UK Press Gazette*, the awards' organiser, which admits that all 40(!) of the *Observer*'s nominations were mislaid. Roy Farndina, editor of the *UK Press Gazette*, says it was the awards PR company that mislaid the entries. He added: "We were amazed and extremely annoyed that this should happen." As presumably was the *Observer*.

**Violence – it
was ever thus**

And finally, a special seasonal award to the two middle-market newspapers that were taken in by the April Fool which appeared in this column yesterday. The alleged BBC season of violent and sexually explicit plays was, of course, a description of works by Shakespeare. So my apologies to the BBC press officer who was woken just after midnight by the two papers anxious to follow up this scandal. And to the BBC education department, which tells me it has been bombarded with calls from viewers objecting to the new season.

Eagle Eye

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The dream of secure jobs

In each generation a political leader rises to power by appearing to pull off a trick. For Harold Macmillan it was persuading us we had never had it so good, even as economic decline was accelerating. For Harold Wilson, arch tactician, it was persuading us he had a vision of Britain remade by the white heat of technology. For Margaret Thatcher it was making us believe individualism and enterprise had created golden years of growth in the mid-Eighties, rather than low interest rates and inflated house prices.

The trick a politician must pull hoping to command the mid-Nineties is already clear: to combine a belief in markets and competition with a commitment to provide people with a sense of security and well-being. That is the context for the G7 jobs summit that ends today in Lille, France. The paucity of good ideas has been exposed already by the descent of the debate into a ritualistic clash of two false armies, the deregulated approach of Britain and the US, against the regulated approach of continental Europe. Neither provides the answers we are looking for.

The Anglo-Saxon model of deregulated labour markets has a much better record for creating jobs than Germany or France, where unemployment is likely to rise even further in the next few years as they cut public spending to squeeze their economies into the straitjacket imposed by Economic and Monetary Union.

That does not mean our approach is without flaws. Indeed they are all too obvious. The jobs we create are invariably too low quality: low skill, poorly-paid jobs often in the service sector. This is in large part a reflection of our disastrous record in education and training, which lags far behind that of Germany and France.

Britain gets only two-thirds of its young people up to an "intermediate level" – the equivalent of five good GCSEs, while Germany gets 80 per cent up to the advanced level, equivalent to A-levels. Sir Ron Dearing's proposals to reform qualifications, published last week, are testimony to how little has been achieved on this front despite wave after wave of reform in the past decade.

Both John Major and Tony Blair have grasped that this is a theme they cannot ignore. Mr Major told the Tory faithful at

the weekend that he recognised the need to combine change with security. But he did not have much to offer and nor can we expect much. Troubling long-term issues such as the funding of higher education have been put firmly on the back burner until after the election. Mr Blair's stakeholding idea, though still dreadfully vague, is an effort to persuade people they have a stake in a society that seems to be moving beneath their feet.

A Germanic model of stakeholding, based on a strong manufacturing sector highly regulated by agreements often negotiated centrally by employers' associations and trade unions, would not work in the UK. It's a non-starter for an open, competitive, decentralised economy that is largely based on service industries in which unions have little clout. Imposing a Germanic model based on co-determination upon British companies will not work. Re-regulating the economy through the introduction of a minimum wage may help some workers in low-paid jobs but it may also reduce overall employment creation without doing much to make society fairer or work more secure. Expecting the welfare system to provide a safety net is unrealistic: voters in work will not stump up significantly more taxes to pay benefits for those out of work.

What might work, however, is stakeholding as a form of contract between the state, the individual and employers. Instead of lifetime employment with a company, there should be lifetime training, retraining, counselling and advice to help people switch careers in mid-life. These lifetime learning accounts – an idea that Labour has already picked up in part – should be contributed to by employers, the state and the worker. Mortgages and health insurance should be tailored to serve people who will be in and out of work, often on short-term contracts.

This is the trick, to combine Britain's entrepreneurial culture and service-based economy with measures of security that do not rely on heavy-handed state intervention or regulation. Either the Conservatives or the Labour Party could pull off this trick. Both are trying. They are still a long way from succeeding.

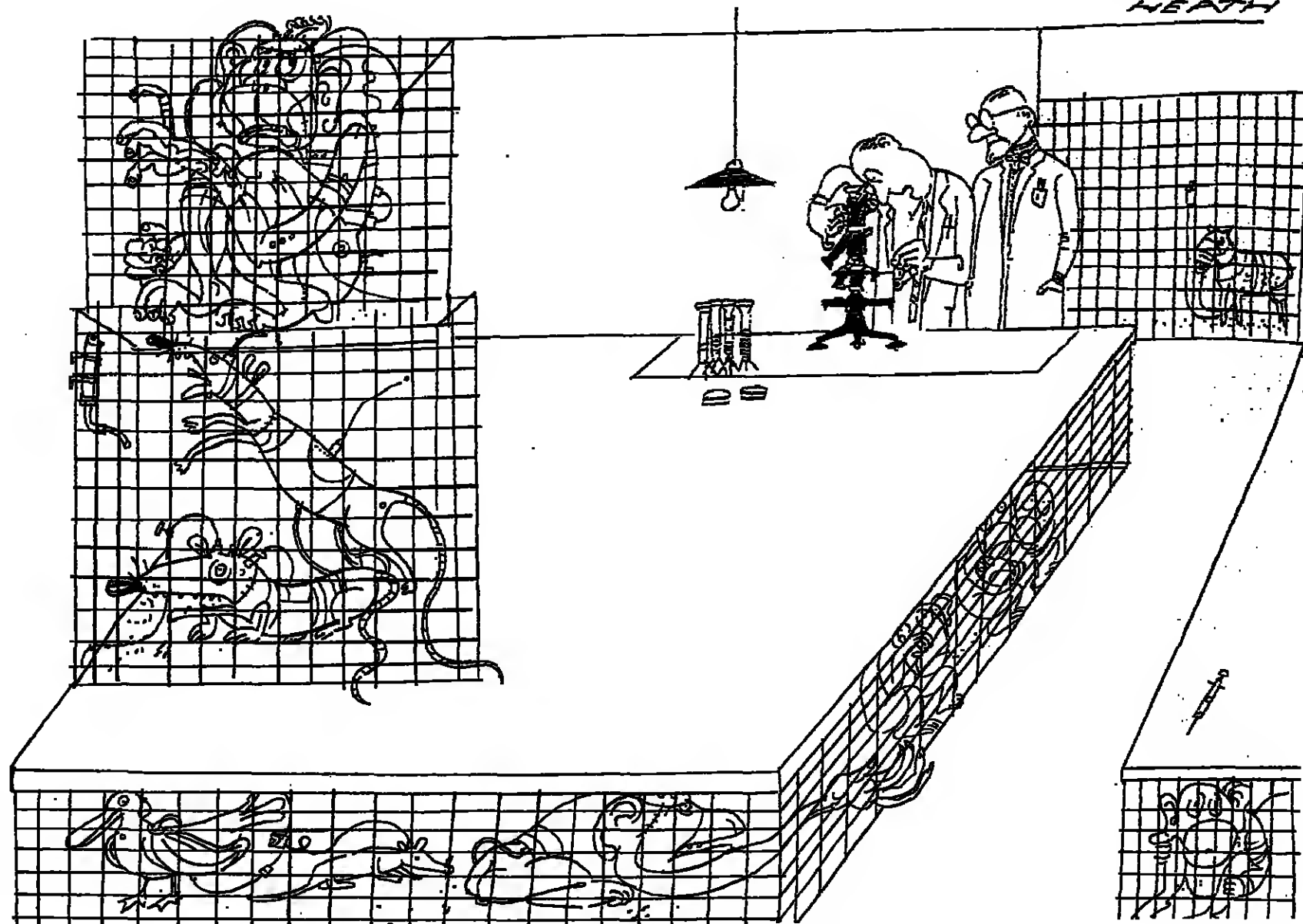
The BBC's challenge

Sir Christopher Bland, the new chairman of the BBC, is an accomplished deal-maker who demonstrates – not for the first time in British life – that in rising to the top, who you know is as important as what you know. Politically, he is a Tory trusty. His appointment in the dog days of this government may not be quite as partisan as demand immediate replacement by a Blair government but it is biased enough to give the country's non-Tory majority grounds for mild anxiety.

Except that Sir Christopher's party allegiances are far less important than his capacity to think imaginatively and strategically about non-profit broadcasting in the multi-media future. For all the policy units and advisers in suites at Broadcasting House, the BBC often produces second-rate futurology. The problem is partly the BBC leadership's almost complete inability to sell (to staff as well as to the outside world) a sense of excitement about the opportunities of the rapidly changing media climate. It is also a problem of circle-squaring. The Government demands the BBC both serve this (fissiparous) nation and compete internationally with the Murdoch, CNNs and others. The objectives may be incompatible.

Let us assume Sir Christopher's footwork is nifty enough and he survives the election. His priority should not be the way the BBC is run, beyond deciding who succeeds John Birt as director-general. Sir Christopher must avoid the trivialities of the Marmaduke Hussey era. He must think strategically about the structure and culture of a business which needs both to compete and to serve.

Sir Christopher must watch television, start to listen to music radio, surf the Net and buy programmable CDs. "Broadcasting" is no longer circumscribed by a hard and fast definition. The principal public service broadcaster cannot be held responsible for a national culture pumped and shaped by global waves of technology and cultural commerce. Nor is it likely to be able to survive as it is. A good chairman of the BBC as the 21st century dawns should have one question constantly on his lips: how much longer can this anachronism persist, so admirable yet so out of date. In his previous job as chairman of London Weekend Television he came up with some very good wheezes to retain talent, motivate managers and win the franchise. He will need that savvy and a lot more to succeed at the BBC.



"I think I've found the next health scare!"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why official theories may hide the true nuclear risks

Sir: Press coverage of last Wednesday's report from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (Comare) gives the impression that radiation has been cleared of blame for the Seascale leukaemia cluster, because doses from Sellafield are too low. Raw sewage, we heard, is a more likely culprit.

However, official perceptions of health hazards from radiation depend crucially upon studies of the long-term effects of a single acute blast of external radiation from the Hiroshima A-bomb. There is now a large body of evidence that these studies are a poor basis for assessing health damage from chronic, low-dose exposure to radiation from man-made fission products, which may be ingested and incorporated into body tissue.

By 1958, the area around Seascale had been plastered with 5,000 hecquerels per square metre of the isotope Strontium-90 – that is more than 10 times the levels of Sr-90 from nuclear weapons testing that shocked officialdom into promulgating the 1963 International test-ban treaty. We are glad to see that the

Comare report expresses reservations about "current knowledge" of radiation hazard, and admits there are "uncertainties regarding internal radiation exposures" and an "urgent need ... for improved knowledge".

In the House of Commons two days before the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster a symposium organised by the Low Level Radiation Campaign and Medact will discuss the health effects of low-dose internal radiation. We are looking for research and funding proposals such as the Comare report also calls for.

RICHARD BRAMALL
Low Level Radiation Campaign
Bulth Wells, Powys

Sir: Raw sewage may have its part to play in the cluster of leukaemia found in Seascale, but having recently studied the issue, I feel that nuclear power plants play an important role in leukaemia clusters, not just in Sellafield but around the country.

Roman and her colleagues, when examining West Berkshire & Basingstoke and Hampshire district health authority data,

within which lie Aldermaston and Burghfield MoD sites, with Harwell UKAEA research establishment a few miles away, found 29 cases of leukaemia and cancers in children aged 0-4 years old where only 14 cases were expected. Goldsmith (1992), studying leukaemia incidence in the vicinity of pre-1955 installations, found 165 observations where 133 were expected from regional data and 141 expected from comparison area data.

Did Professor Bridges examine the possibility that plutonium attached to silt and mud in the sea had been washed up on local beaches and had subsequently been inhaled by children and adults alike? A few grammes of dried silt inhaled from Cumbrian estuaries is enough to satisfy the annual inhalation dose limit for adults.

CAROLINE J BUSTARD
Coventry

Sir: The fears of GPs on Benbecula about a link between Chernobyl and increased local cancer rates (report, 1 April), and the ongoing heath scare raise questions about freedom of information, vested interests and public accountability.

The number affected by CJD is less than the number of Lottery millionaires. The Government repeatedly tells us that there is no certainty about the dangers, but has nevertheless ordered a robust response to minimise the risks.

Conversely, we have concrete evidence of the effects of radiation. In the words of the International Commission for Radiological Protection, "Any exposure to radiation may carry some risk for the development of somatic effects, including leukaemia and other malignancies and of hereditary effects." Where is the sweeping government action to eradicate the risk of radiation-induced cancer? The Government reaffirmed earlier this year that it is still not safe to eat lamb from sheep bred in parts of Britain because of a nuclear disaster which occurred 10 years ago and 1,500 miles away, and now there may be a causal link between Chernobyl and cancer rates in the British Isles.

JANET BLOOMFIELD
Chair, CND
London N7

No alternative to transferable vote

Sir: The position of the Liberal Democrats on electoral reform is unchanged. We favour the Single Transferable Vote as the system best designed to reflect fairly in Parliament the voting preferences of the electorate.

Your report (1 April), which claims that I have "intimated" Liberal Democrat willingness to consider the Alternative Vote system and "suggested" modifications to it is wrong on both counts. Like others in all parties who recognise the distortions produced by the present "first past the post" voting system, I do look for cross-party support for electoral reform where it may be found, but what the reformers seek is a properly proportional system. The Alternative Vote is not that system.

ROBERT MACLENNAN MP
House of Commons

BSE: slaughter infected herds, not old cattle

Sir: I am not reassured by the government policy to cull the meat of older cattle from the food chain. As a consumer, what I understand of the current state of knowledge is:

- 1) There may be a link between BSE and CJD.
- 2) BSE may be passed from one generation to another and may therefore be latent in young cattle.
- 3) BSE may be present throughout the meat of infected cattle through the nervous system.
- 4) There are a large number of herds which have never been affected by BSE.

What would reassure me is a policy of selective slaughter of infected herds and promotion of healthy ones. I spoke recently to a farmer on the island of Coll, who said that he buys his cattle from Ireland, where this selective culling policy has been in force.

I would be happy to eat his cattle but at present have no means of distinguishing it from other beef on the market.

SUSAN CARSTAIRS
Arisaig, Inverness-shire

Sir: As a poultry keeper, I must correct one statement in Andrew Marr's otherwise excellent article "Town vs Country" (29 March). Colouring in poultry feed is to give the yolks more colour. In battery hens these would be pale and insipid; the naturally golden yellow colour comes from free-range hens eating grass and other vegetation.

The shell colour is purely to do with the breed of bird. The reason for the idea that brown eggs are free-range and white are battery produced comes from the early days of battery farming, when smaller Mediterranean breeds such as white leghorns

were used, which laid white eggs naturally. By selective breeding and crossing, the modern small hybrid was produced, which lays brown eggs to satisfy consumer demand.

PAT DAVIES
Sevenoaks Weald, Kent

Sir: Beef is not the only problem. Very soon our meat will be accompanied by genetically engineered vegetables. Some of these (e.g. soy beans) have been designed to tolerate high levels of very toxic herbicides. Some (e.g. brassicas) will incorporate pyrethroid-type insecticides. Others are engineered to conceal the visible signs of rotting (tomatoes). Do we really need or want any of these? They have been bred for the convenience of the suppliers rather than the eaters.

Mrs J M FASHAM
Hindhead, Surrey

Short-sighted West Bank raids

Sir: The detention of Palestinian students at Bir Zeit University (29 March) shows how depressingly little has changed on the West Bank since the Oslo accords.

The Israeli army gave as one reason for the arrests the need to round up students "staying in these areas illegally". Bir Zeit University in the West Bank offers a number of courses not available at institutions in the Gaza Strip. Under the Oslo Declaration of Principles, the Israelis pledged to treat the West Bank and Gaza as a single unit. They have not done so, and young people from Gaza who obtain university places in the West Bank are required to have special permits. These are issued for a very limited period and the authorities may then confiscate or fail to renew them.

Palestinian access to tertiary education will promote and protect the desire for peace; mass round-ups and hindfoldings students will have the opposite effect. They will make young people even more susceptible to the argument by groups such as Hamas that negotiation has failed and political violence is therefore legitimate.

SARAH SMALLEY
Cambridge

Divorce: children must come first

Sir: How much I agree with Christine Roe (letter, 28 March). The Divorce Bill should be amended to create a presumption against the granting of a divorce while there are children of the marriage under 16. That presumption could be rebutted, but only against specified criteria, and after a court welfare officer had recommended that the children were more likely to be harmed by the continuance of the marriage than its dissolution.

STEPHEN G LINTSEAD
Solihull, West Midlands

Logomania

Sir: 1 April 1996 marks the start of the Welsh Year of the Logo. From Monday, 37 district councils, eight county councils, nine district health authorities, eight fire brigades and their logos all bit the dust. In their place we have 22 unitary authorities, five district health authorities and four fire brigades, all with new logos. Where were the share tipsters' calls to invest in logo designers, printers, sign writers, crest designers? It must be Wales's boom industry.

RUSSELL DEACON
Cardiff

Switch off TV addiction

Sir: Regarding Peter Popham's article, "Perils of a zap-happy life" (25 March). Up to the age of two my son became increasingly drawn to television, switching it on first thing in the morning, without bothering to eat breakfast or say good morning to his parents. It was then difficult to prise him away and the TV's noise made it impossible to listen to the radio or read a paper.

I asked my son, would he like to go and play football in the park? No, came the reply. Would he like to ride his bike in the park? No. Would he like to go swimming? No. What would he like to do? Watch television. And then one day I heard myself describe my child as hard work, when I really felt that I hardly knew him. It was clear. The TV had to go.

The first TV-free month was, in my experience of child-rearing, the hardest thing I have ever done. Weaning James off television involved organised activities, all day, every day, from early morning to bedtime and he resented the fact that the television had been removed. After about a month, however, things changed dramatically; he started to forget about the TV, mornings were relaxed and our son was conversing with us.

Getting rid of the TV was the best thing we have ever done as it gave us a period in which to adjust in peace and quiet. We now select which programmes we watch, discussing what the programme offers us, and my children watch about four hours' television per week.

LINDA BROWNING
London SE3

Sir: Peter Popham's article states the obvious – that too much TV is not good for kids. He doesn't state the other obvious – that children don't have to watch all the TV that is offered to them.

As I write at 4pm my two children, far from watching TV, are out in the pouring rain playing football. When they do watch an hour or so of TV it is to give them a break between school and their many other activities. There isn't time in a busy child's life for too much TV. It is up to the parents to ensure that the button stays off and the child does other things too.

PAULA SAUNDERS
St Albans, Hertfordshire

How Ireland got its martyrs

Sir: Perhaps more significant than the anti-Irish propaganda of Gerald of Wales (report, 20 March) was the prophetic answer he received from the Archbishop of Cashel, whom he reproached for the lack of Irish martyrs.

"It is true," said the venerable gentleman, "that although our people are very barbarous, uncivilised and savage, nevertheless they have always paid great honour and reverence to churchmen, and they have never put out their hands against the saints of God. But now a people has come to the kingdom which knows how, and is accustomed, to make martyrs. From now on Ireland will have its martyrs, just as other countries."

JEAN LAWES
Hereford

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

An open and shut-eye account of libel

How much do you know about the law? Do you always know when you are breaking it? How good a jury member would you make? Do you even think you would shine as a barrister? Well, here's a little test for you to find out. Read the account of the following fictional court case and then say what you think the verdict should be.

Once upon a time, there was a columnist of a daily newspaper, who found himself increasingly mesmerised by the performance of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

It seemed incomprehensible to this columnist that Howard should ever have been made Home Secretary, since his arrogant smugness seemed matched only by his inability to become one of the great magisterial bombastaries of all time.

The columnist was not the only one who felt that Mr Howard always seemed to be making the wrong decisions – he was constantly being told by various judges and courts that he was making the wrong decisions.

The columnist therefore felt that he was not imagining things. It was true that Mr Howard seemed to be the wrong man for the job of Home Secretary. Not only did he seem smug, arrogant and unmagisterial, but he also seemed to enjoy standing up at Tory Party conferences and making rabble-



MILES KINGSTON

rousing speeches, in which he threatened to crack down on crime using various measures, none of which appeared to be enacted, except his favourite project of building more prisons.

Mr Howard even declaimed that prison worked, although all the evidence showed the opposite. In other words, he not only seemed smug, arrogant and unmagisterial, he also seemed to have a gift for self-deception. He was also accused by various people of having knee-jerk policies – ie policies that were brought in hastily and thoughtlessly in order to appease public reaction.

Occasionally his knee-jerk reactions got him into trouble, like when he unreasonably sacked Derek Lewis, the head of the prison service, who promptly sued him for unfair dismissal. The Home Office doled out large amounts of public money to calm Mr Lewis down, a tacit

admission that Mr Howard had made a big error.

Mr Howard, however, did not admit that he had made a big error. This was because he not only seemed smug, arrogant, unmagisterial and prone to self-deception, he also seemed to be incapable of ever admitting he was wrong about anything, perhaps on the grounds that if he started admitting he was wrong about the things he had been wrong about, it would take up too much of his working day.

Most of the time the columnist wrote about other things but, from time to time, he was so incensed by the spectacle of Mr Howard that he lambasted him in print, saying that he seemed to be the most smug, arrogant, unmagisterial, self-deceiving and rabble-rousing Home Secretary since homes and secretaries were invented.

Nothing ever came of this, of course. Columnists do not change things and nobody ever pays attention to them. Even so, the columnist would sometimes lie awake at night and wonder if he had gone too far. He would always be careful to say that Mr Howard seemed to be all these things but, at the same time, he felt vaguely surprised that he had never had a libel writ from Mr Howard.

One day, the columnist decided to

ally these fears by, rather oddly, inventing a libel case. He told his readers that he had received a writ for libel from the Home Secretary, which he would be fiercely contesting.

He then proceeded to describe the details of the writ and, by and by, the progress of the court case, including the testimony of the main witnesses (who included Mr Lewis) and the words of the counsel involved. He also invented Mr Howard's testimony in the witness stand – a rabble-rousing effort if ever there was one.

All of this, as his readers well understood, was fictitious and frivolous. So the columnist was more than somewhat surprised to receive a real writ for libel, from Mr Howard, who claimed that he had falsely invented a libel case involving Mr Howard. Therefore, Mr Howard was suing the columnist for libel, the libel being that Mr Howard had sued the columnist for libel which, Mr Howard claimed, he had not done before although he was doing so now.

The case dragged on for weeks, and many witnesses appeared in court, including Mr Lewis.

Just as the case was coming to an end, the columnist woke up, so he never found out what the verdict would have been.

What do you think it was?

SPY 1201520

Changing the chemistry of politics

The Liberal Democrats and Labour are edging towards agreement on reforming the voting system

Before the dam breaks, tiny, barely visible cracks appear. Over the past few days, just such a significant fissure has appeared in the smooth wall of the British party system. It isn't easy to spot, coming in the form of a hint from some unnamed Liberal Democrats about something called the Alternative Vote. It may be early, telling evidence of a bigger and more ruthless event.

But to understand why, we need to start with some tribal history. Since the first neolithic Liberal activist emerged from a dank cave full of hison bones (or since the party stopped winning general elections, at any rate) the Liberals, and then Liberal Democrats, have been committed to a particular kind of voting system, called STV. This is proportional – a long word for fair – and complicated.

It requires large constituencies, from which up to five MPs are elected. And Liberals love it, overwhelmingly, unconditionally, beyond reason – rather like small girls love Barbie and Germans love beer.

Similarly, every good Liberal is taught, at an early age, to fear and detest another kind of voting system, known as the Alternative Vote, or AV. In brief, this means that no candidate can win a seat without having more than half the votes; every voter getting second and third choices to be redistributed if necessary.

To you, dear reader, this may not seem particularly shocking. But Good Liberals regard it as akin to incest, or reading the *Daily Mail*. Because AV is not really proportional, or fair, they see it as a swindle. So the news that leading Lib Dem parliamentarians are signalling their interest in

AV is like finding Ian Paisley crouched in a confessional.

So what are they up to? They are having private conversations with the Labour Party which may lead to a dramatic reshaping of the British political system.

Up to now, the centre-right of British politics has kept itself together as "the Conservative Party", while the centre-left has often been divided. This simple fact has shaped 20th-century Britain – its hierarchies of power, its distribution of wealth, its distinctive and unusual class system. The eclipse of the Liberal Party by Labour, and later Labour splits, helped to ensure that, despite the achievements of the post-war Attlee government, this has been fairly called "the Conservative century".

The great question for Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown is whether they can change the basic chemistry of party politics to fuse the centre-left and divide the centre-right. Proportional representation might have that effect. If Blair believes there is a welfare state, pro-Europe majority in the country, he could, just possibly, unite it under his personal leadership in a way that the Tories would then find very difficult to shift.

Even without that, both opposition parties see the advantages of campaigning on the theme of "all Britain against the Tories". No one is seriously suggesting an electoral pact. But a campaign which saw Labour and Lib Dem politicians repeating similar policy ideas and arguments – and avoiding attacks in one another – would convey a new message.

One version of such a deal would work like this. Blair, already commit-



ANDREW MARR

Tony Blair knows that the potential rewards are enormous

ted to a referendum on voting reform, accepts that he cannot go through a general election without saying whether or not he favours change. He takes a deep breath and says that, on balance, he thinks we do need a fairer system, thus demolishing the highest remaining policy difference between the parties.

But which system might he change to? STV would mean redrawing every constituency boundary. It would be fiercely fought not only by the Conservatives but also by many Labour MPs. The other main system is a "list" system, which continues with single constituencies but adds extra Members from central party lists and is detested at Westminster because it would create two classes of MPs.

Though there are endless hybrids and variants, the other main system is AV. Its effect would be very different from STV. One projection of the 1992 results by the London School of

Economics implies very little change. Under the AV system, the Tories would have had 11 fewer MPs than John Major actually won; Labour would have had one less and the Lib Dems would have had 10 more.

Under STV, by contrast, the Tories would have fallen by 80, and the Lib Dems would have rocketed up. Such figures are speculative and not universally accepted – Vernon Bogdanor, who has devoted more time to the subject than almost anyone, disputes the very modest AV projections.

But however you play it, the difference between AV and STV is dramatic, the difference between redecoration and demolition. During the past two attempts to change the system, in 1977/1978 and in 1993, the pro-change case fell partly because of bickering between supporters of AV and STV. This time, change would probably be dependent on Labour and the Liberal Democrats agreeing which system they could live with.

Hence the significance of any Liberal Democrat tilt towards the once-despised AV. They may hope that once Blair has started moving, his own logic will drive him further. But they seem prepared to do business. One reason is given by a Liberal Democrat candidate writing in a party magazine, *The Reformer*.

"There are very few seats where we come a good second to the Labour Party, suggesting that if we don't make significant gains this time, it is going to be an awful lot harder next time. ... There appear to be very few seats that will easily fall our way by attacking Blair," he wrote.

There would be no talk of a formal

coalition or of cabinet seats for Liberal Democrats. But the party would urge voters to vote tactically against the Conservatives, and get similar support from Labour, thus maximising the anti-Tory mood. And if Blair won, the Lib Dems would support him in Parliament on issues including Scottish home rule, a hill of rights and perhaps education reform, while helping to offset the Labour left on issues like Europe.

There are plenty of senior Labour people who view such a deal with deep suspicion. After years of trying to keep the lid on Labour's spending plans, for instance, Gordon Brown would not relish trying to defend Liberal Democrat expenditure commitments, which he is known to regard as wildly over the top.

But Blair is clearly intrigued by the thought of spreading his "project" widely enough across the spectrum to give him 10 or 15 years in power rather than a Labour leader's usual four or five. He talks eloquently about pluralism. He has focused his objections to voting reform on the possibility of extremist parties gaining seats, and on support for the single-member constituency; both of these are objections which, as he must know perfectly well, could be answered by AV or a list system.

He is, in short, doing some serious thinking. Blair knows that the balance of probability is that he can win on his own; that he doesn't need to take this risk. But he also knows that the potential rewards are enormous. And as the man said, flashing an immodest smile at a press conference last week, he's always believed in upping the stakes.

Gels just want to have fun

The Season opens tonight, but debutantes want unwedded bliss not marriage, says Libby Spurrier

The origins of the London social season go back 216 years, to a royal birthday present. In 1780, for her 36th birthday, George III gave his wife, Queen Charlotte, a party at which the newest and prettiest girls in town were presented to her. This charming and (at that time) novel idea became the launch pad of the London "Season". The girls, known as debutantes (from the French for "beginner") were formally presented to the sovereign, after which they floated off like a flock of young swans on the waters of London's social life. The significant fact was that they had seen their sovereign face to face: proud fathers and fussing mothers had been identified ("yes, she's one of the *Yorkshire Swales*" people would say for ever afterwards), and the girl could now head serenely for the Sea of Matrimony.

Until the end of the 19th century, there were only between 5,000 and 10,000 members of the titled classes and landed gentry, and most people lived within horse-and-carriage range of only a few dozen; hence the need to come to London to command a decent selection of marriage partners. Money and property have always been important elements in a "good marriage" – see Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* – but connections, or what the aristocracy called "cousinage", were even more vital. Being well born was more important than being well heeled.

Between 1780 and 1930, the shape and purpose of the Season remained basically unchanged. A family that was too poor, or disinclined, to accompany its fledgling to London for three months (from May till the start of the grouse-shooting season) could use a chaperone to drag her from ballroom to hall. Originally, this might be a married sister or an unmarried aunt, though in due course the practice was corrupted and paid chaperones were used – but always sneered at.

A marriage market is, in truth, what the Season has always been about – which is why, today, it has become no more than an illusion. Few "gels" are docile enough to take much notice of their parents' wishes in the matter of a husband, and even among the upper classes, the practice of cohabitation has taken hold.

For pretty, witty, confident girls the season could be highly enjoyable; but then, for girls like that most things are. For those unfortunates who were

shy, plain, bookish or simply gauche, the Season was a nightmare. Debs from the Thirties remember spending half the night in the ladies' powder room, pretending to stich a fallen hem rather than face the ordeal of a dance floor full of strangers. Today's more assertive young women would be more likely to retire to the ladies' powder room for quite another sort of powder. Times have changed, and with them the Season.

The fundamental change is that a woman's sole destiny no longer has to be a lifetime of marriage and breeding – first children; then dogs and horses. Two world wars have trans-

formed the social landscape. During both wars many young women worked in hospitals, and in the second, served in the armed forces. They found that even lowly and harrowing work could be more satisfying than marriage and domesticity, however grand. In any case, there is always a shortage of eligible young men and a surplus of heart-broken young women in the aftermath of war.

Finally, the class structure was changing and with it the money basis of the aristocracy. The upper classes were getting poorer; many could no longer afford to spend tens of thousands of pounds in search of a suitable husband for an increasingly rebellious daughter. For all these reasons, what today purports to be the Season is a shadow of its former reality. True, there are still events such as the Berkeley Dress Show, which opens the Season tonight, and Queen Charlotte's Ball, but these have to advertise for recruits in girls' boarding schools, and are laboriously padded out by an army of snobbish PRs. In reality, these have become occasions at which rich businessmen make good contacts while their wives try to set up a future social life against the empty days when their daughters have flown the coop – most probably not into matrimony at all, but to go backpacking in Nepal, share a flat in Fulham or even to live in unwedded bliss with some quite unsuitable fellow.

The Real World fights back

Today, an extraordinary coalition will challenge the Earth's enemies: pollution, poverty and paralysis. Paul Valley reports on a movement that aims to rewrite party politics

It is not, says Jonathon Porritt, a new political party. Definitely not.

You might be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Today, in that establishment hinterland between Whitehall and St James's, Mr Porritt and fellow travellers will launch Real World, a political grouping with suggestions to make on everything from tax rises, crime and unemployment to traffic pollution, stress at work and poverty in the Third World.

But if – unlike Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party – they will not be putting up candidates at the next general election, Porritt & Co make no secret of their intention to change the nature of the political debate in Britain in the run-up to the election so that a different set of issues comes to the fore.

It may not be an idle intention. Real World is a coalition of 32 campaigning charities and pressure groups which between them already claim more than 2.1 million supporters.

"People instinctively know that British politics is not at present facing up to the challenge of the real world," says Mr Porritt. "Politicians ask why the feelgood factor hasn't returned," adds another of the coalition's leading lights, the economist Michael Jacobs, research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change. "It is because people are not feeling good about the society in which they live."

"Politicians make the mistake of talking about the standard of living entirely in terms of how much money people have in their pockets after tax. But quality of life is different from standard of living. Having more disposable income does not buy you out of the problems caused by crime, air pollution, traffic congestion, stress at work and job insecurity. In the real world – in which ordinary people live – the quality of life seems to be falling in many areas, and not just for the poor but for ordinary, average-income people. We need a new kind of political debate to address that."

Those who have joined Real World are not just environmentalists. Members include Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, Transport 2000, the Employment Policy Institute, Save the Children Fund, the Town and Country Planning Association, Population Concern, the World Wide Fund for

Nature, Christian Aid, Charter 88, and Church Action on Poverty.

The project has been four years gestating. It began after the last election when Mr Porritt and others had "a sense of near despair" that issues of the environment and international development disappeared utterly from the political agenda once a general election was called. Determined that this should not happen next time, he and close colleagues gathered together campaigners from various backgrounds who had never before worked together. The environmentalists were gradually joined by aid agencies, then advocates of constitutional reform and then groups involved with poverty in the UK.

They compared poverty in the Third World with that in the UK, examined how constitutional issues related to social justice, asked what community meant in a modern world, contrasted the ecological and social justice agendas and formulated the "standard of living versus quality of life" debate.

"We concluded," says Mr Porritt, "that if you don't set up the circumstances in which people can achieve a decent quality of life, you can forget the natural world at home and abroad. Social justice and sustainability are inextricably wedded. Moreover, we became convinced that without democratic renewal and constitutional reform there is no way to move the agenda through our atrophied political systems."

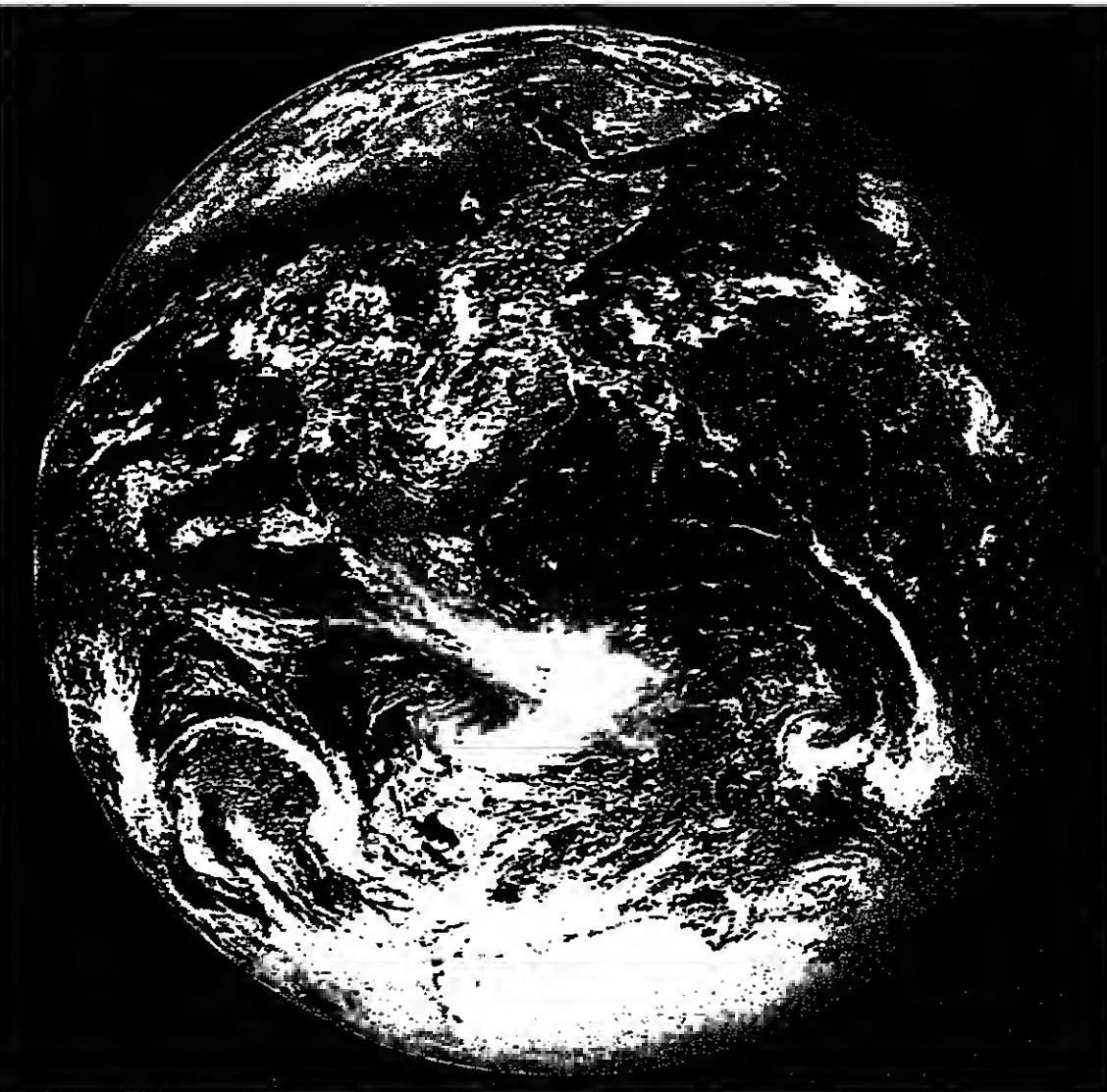
It is ironic that a period which has seen a rapid decline in membership of political parties, in favour of single-issue pressure groups, should end

"If you can't help people to achieve a decent quality of life, you can forget the natural world"

with the single-issue people becoming convinced of the inter-relatedness of their agendas. In part, that is a response to the globalisation of the world economy; financial deregulation and increased cross-border activity by multinational companies has meant that the problems of one sector impact more visibly on others; much single-issue lobbying of single companies looks fragmented and desultory. But

get significant reductions in unemployment unless we redistribute different types of work – between men and women and over different periods of people's lives – and we have to invest in the public and voluntary sectors. No one else is saying that."

Just how will he set out at the Real World launch today as part of a 12-point action programme for government. Other proposals include job



it also stems from a conviction that – on both sides – the mainstream political debate is too limited.

"Take unemployment," argues Mr Jacobs. "Labour says it's about education and training and the Tories say it's about more flexible labour markets. Neither of those convinces anybody. We're saying we're not going to

subsidies for the long-term unemployed, more social housing, more and better-targeted aid to the Third World and a fiscally neutral reform package shifting tax from jobs (they want to abolish National Insurance) to pollution, waste, energy and transport. More controversially, they talk about increases in income tax.

All of which sounds pretty much like a party political programme. Mr Porritt insists not. "We're not putting up candidates; we're not aiming to endorse candidates," he says. "And we'll use our analytical and campaigning skills to work with all parties. This agenda has to be driven in an all-party fashion. If it's the preserve of any one party, you automatically set every other party against you. What we're trying to do – at its most ambitious – is to change the framework within which parties do battle with each other."

Not everyone is convinced. Greenpeace has declined to join; publicly because its policy is not to enter coalitions, but privately because it doubts

More to libraries than getting wired

ANOTHER VIEW

Gillian Cross

the library as a physical place. In a multicultural, multi-faith society, the library building provides an important social centre for everyone, offering not merely information, but friendly, professional advice. All kinds of people can meet on an equal footing. We should build on our infrastructure of 4,000 public libraries and use them for

exhibitions, for community activities and for advice centres. They could become places where people meet the mentors who will help them to plan their learning throughout their lives. They could provide suitably informal centres for assessment of that learning and the awarding of qualifications. The opportunities are there to be seized.

Wiring up libraries does not mean the end of book-borrowing, either. For the foreseeable future, a great part of what people want to read will still be found in books. We must ensure that libraries have a comprehensive stock.

All this will need money. But what is required, above all, is vision. Previous Secretaries of State for National Heritage have failed public libraries by largely ignoring them, and so making them politically invisible. They have given the impression that libraries are dull. Libraries are not dull. They play a crucial part in our national life, culture and economy. If Mrs Bottomley understands that, and proclaims it with fervour and commitment, she will put libraries at the top of everyone's agenda. We must all hope that she does not let us down.

The writer is a children's author and a member of the Government's Advisory Council on Libraries.

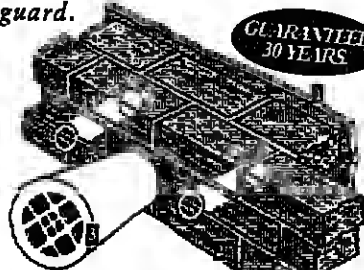
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Everyone who cares about this country should be waiting, with bated breath, for Virginia Bottomley's statement, expected this week, on the future of public libraries. Libraries cannot simply be maintained as they are. If they do not develop quickly to provide what we need in the next century, they will be marginalised and decline. Mrs Bottomley must make it plain that public libraries are for everyone. Used by 60 per cent of the population – not just by particular social groups – like children, pensioners and the unemployed – they must continue to provide a first-class service for life-long learning. Without that, our national ability to respond to change will be severely restricted.

Bell in \$17bn tie-up with Pacific as merger mania hits

JOHN WILLCOCK

The gates opened to a new wave of mega-mergers in the US telecommunications sector yesterday as SBC Communications and Pacific Telesis Group agreed to merge in a \$16.7bn (£1.1bn) deal, becoming the second-largest company in the sector behind AT&T.

The joining of the two regional Baby Bell phone companies is the most dramatic deal since Congress deregulated the industry on 8 February, and analysts believe it is a harbinger of similar gigantic combinations to come.

SBC said the merger would create the second-largest telecommunications company by market value in the US, and the merger is the first of its kind between two former Bell System companies. The merger gives the companies greater size and financial power to offer a

broader range of services, something made possible by the law. The two companies are among seven formed from the 1984 break-up of the old Bell System monopoly. Together, they serve the two largest states, California and Texas, and will have 30 million phone lines.

The merged company will be roughly two-thirds owned by original SBC shareholders. The business will have more than 100,000 employees, revenues of over \$21bn, operating cash flow of \$9bn, and income of almost \$3bn. The two former Bell System companies serve more than 30 million access lines.

Whitacre Jr. Pacific Telesis chairman and chief executive Phil Quigley will become vice-chairman. The merged company will be roughly two-thirds owned by original SBC shareholders. The business will have more than 100,000 employees, revenues of over \$21bn, operating cash flow of \$9bn, and income of almost \$3bn. The two former Bell System companies serve more than 30 million access lines.

Although local Bell phone companies were not previously banned from combining, long-distance companies were stopped from merging with local companies and vice versa. Cable companies were also banned from offering phone services. All these prohibitions were swept away last month, creating a new bout of "merger mania."

Mr Quigley said yesterday: "In this new competitive environment, customer satisfaction, a strong market presence, efficient and lower-cost operations, a substantial financial base and quality and innovative services will be crucial to success in the marketplace."

Under the deal Pacific Telesis shareholders will receive 0.733 shares of SBC stock for each of their shares. Based on last week's stock prices, Pacific Telesis shareholders would receive SBC stock worth about \$39 per share. When complete, SBC shareholders would own about 66 per cent of the combined company and 34 per cent would be held by Pacific Telesis investors.

Carlton and Mirror 'set to bid for TV football'

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Carlton Communications and Mirror Group are prepared to bid up to £200m a year for the right to broadcast Premier League football matches after 1997, sources close to the Premier League said last night.



Eye on the ball: Michael Green of Carlton

Carlton's chief executive, Michael Green, and Mirror Group's Kelvin MacKenzie, head of the company's television operations, are scheduled to meet next week to discuss their attempt to wrest the contract from Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

Mirror Group, which owns 43 per cent of the Independent, declined to comment last night. Carlton did not return calls.

Carlton controls two ITV licences, Carlton (weekday in London) and Central, and is believed to be considering expanding its small UK cable operations, currently limited to control of SelectTV, the cable-only entertainment channel it bought earlier this year. The company has been rumoured as a potential bidder for Mirror Group, but it is now thought co-operation on the television front may be more likely.

Mirror operates the money-losing LiveTV, a national entertainment channel, and publishes profitable newspapers including the Daily Mirror. It is expected that the two companies would use the newspapers to promote the Premier League service if their bid was successful.

The two companies have not ruled out offering a subsidiary deal to BSkyB, which holds the exclusive rights to the Premiership until 1997, in order to provide matches for satellite subscribers as well.

The current £304m, five-year deal between the League and BSkyB is scheduled to run out at the end of next season. But negotiations to renew the contract, or to entertain rival bids, are expected to start in earnest later this year. BSkyB has preemptive rights to match any competing bid. However, the terms of its deal with the League is currently the subject of an inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading, and the company could have regulatory difficulties in the future.



On a roll: Jonathan Fry, chief executive (right), and finance director Brian Hardy celebrating a 15 per cent profits surge Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Far East boosts Burmah Castrol

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Scarcing demand for Castrol lubricants in the buoyant economies of the Far East kept profits on a roll at Burmah Castrol last year. Volume growth of more than 20 per cent in markets from India to Vietnam more than made up for sluggish conditions in the mature markets of Europe and the US.

That growth confirmed the wisdom of the group's decision to focus the bulk of its marketing spend on the fast growing markets of the Pacific Rim. One of British business's most successful exporters to Asia, Burmah raised eyebrows last year when it took 150 of its most senior managers to China for a strategy conference.

Profits, which jumped 15 per cent before tax from £219.5m to £253m, also benefited from the decision in the middle of 1995 to pull out of petrol retailing in the UK, where a vicious price war has sent profits tumbling at Burmah's former rivals. The sale of the business for £83m to Frost Group was made just before the price war broke out in earnest.

Lawrence Urquhart, chairman, said: "As we enter 1996, Asia remains buoyant while South America exhibits signs of recovery. However, subdued market conditions are evident in the developed markets of Europe and North America, although activity is forecast to pick up later in the year."

After a 17 per cent increase in earnings per share from 57.3p to 66.9p, the dividend increased 12 per cent to 36.25p. Burmah remains dominated by its Castrol lubricants business, where profits increased by 13 per cent to £204.3m. That reflected a 5 per cent volume improvement as the company continued to take share of a global market growing at only about 1 per cent a year. Although car ownership around the world is growing fast, modern vehicles use much less oil.

No green light for BT deal, Lang says

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The Government yesterday squashed speculation that it had given the go-ahead to any merger between BT and Cable & Wireless, which is widely expected within weeks.

In an unusual move, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said: "The Government has not given any approval in principle to a possible merger between British Telecommunications and Cable & Wireless. Should these two companies propose a merger, then the competition authorities in the UK, in Europe, and in other parts of the world would need to consider the position."

There have been rumours that the Government has encouraged the talks between the two companies and would use its golden share to prevent a counter-bid for C&W. However, Mr Lang added: "It would be inappropriate for the UK Government to prejudice any future decisions by the UK competition authorities."

At the same time Deutsche Telekom dismissed as "pure speculation" reports that it is in the running to buy C&W's Mercury Communications subsidiary if the £35bn merger proceeds. Industry sources say that Deutsche is BT's favoured buyer, but a spokesman for the German group said: "In this industry everyone is talking to everyone."

City analysts have also speculated that Mercury - BT's big UK rival would have to be divested - could be bought by Nyx, the cable company or by AT&T of the US.

BT has consistently refused to comment on its plans other than to confirm that its advisers are in talks with those of C&W.

UK output shows steep decline

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Latest figures show Britain's manufacturing industry on the verge of a slump, just as the high street is showing signs of recovering the elusive "feel-good" factor lost in the last recession.

UK manufacturers saw output drop in March to its lowest level since October 1992, the seventh month in a row when production has been either flat or falling, according to Britain's purchasing managers. Meanwhile, the amount of notes and coins circulating in the economy - seen as a good measure of consumer spending - edged up 1.5 per cent in the first quarter, suggesting people are increasingly confident about splashing out on high street goods.

The figures were seen as reinforcing expectations of a continuing slow-down in the economy, increasing the prospects for a further cut in interest rates from their current 6 per cent.

But most economists yesterday held to the line that rates, cut three times in the past three months, were more likely to move in May than following tomorrow's meeting between Bank of England Governor Eddie George and Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke.

MMC delivers an early verdict on power firms

MICHAEL HARRISON

Trade Secretary Ian Lang has received reports on the bids for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity by National Power and PowerGen, fuelling speculation that another bout of takeover activity is about to hit the sector.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission delivered its verdict on the two bids to Lang's office on Friday - a week earlier than expected - and an announcement is expected in the next few weeks.

Shares in all four power companies rose as the market bet that both bids would be cleared although with conditions attached to prevent the two generators wielding undue influence in the market.

In return for approval, the generators have volunteered to ring fence their generation and supply activities, guarantee transparency in pricing and ensure that the market for contracts is sufficiently liquid to prevent them from rigging the electricity pool.

Should the two bids be waved through there is speculation that it will re-ignite interest in the remaining independent RECs from foreign utilities and electricity companies. Eight of the 12 RECs will have been swallowed up by rival UK utilities or large overseas operators if the bids by National Power and PowerGen go through.

It would also result in a sharp increase in vertical integration of generation and supply - reversing the way the industry was broken up on privatisation in 1990.

PowerGen has already agreed to sell 2,000 megawatts of plant to Hanson, which now owns Eastern Electricity while Hanson is among four bidders short-listed by National Power for 4,000 megawatts of capacity it must sell off.

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Frankfurt	2489.09	+3.22	+0.1	2525.42

INTEREST RATES				
Short sterling	6.50			
UK medium gilt	6.5			
US long bond	6.5			

Money Market Rates				
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
UK	5.94	6.44	8.11	8.42
US	5.38	5.63	6.33	7.14
Japan	0.52	0.84	1.78	3.41
Germany	3.25	3.41	6.40	7.10

CURRENCIES				
£/\$	1.55			
£/DM	2.20			
£/¥	160.9			

Pound				
Yesterday	1.5254	-0.011c	1.5169	
\$ (NY)	1.5250	-0.015c	1.5166	
DM (London)	2.2623	+0.006d	2.2182	
¥ (London)	164.013	+0.963	138.356	
£ Index	83.6	+0.2	85.0	

Dollar				
Yesterday	0.6566	+0.05	0.6185	
£ (London)	0.6567	+0.05	0.6178	
DM (London)	1.4532	+0.08d	1.3723	
¥ (London)	107.525	+0.725	86.19	
£ Index	96.0	+0.2	88.1	

OTHER INDICATORS				
Yesterday	19.52	+0.17	17.34	
Oil Brent \$	19.52	+0.17	17.34	
Gold \$	394.90	-1.85	391.90	
Gold £	255.88	-0.4	242.28	
Base Rates	-	-	8.00pc	8.75

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business

Shake-up of water industry proves damp squib

COMMENT

So much for the promised radical shake-up of our water industry. What was heralded in the weekend press as the biggest has in practice turned out to be something of a damp squib.

Even judged against the water industry's somewhat soporific Richter scale of events, this one would be hard pressed to register much more than one. If the cause of the weekend's sensation was John Gummer's propaganda machine, then he must have intended it as an April Fool's joke. The Environment Secretary's proposals for "increased customer choice" add up to little more than a hill of beans.

What the Government wants, and what it is going to get, are two very different things. Its starting point is that prices are too high and that the best way of redressing this is through competition. With modern technology and operating systems, Mr Gummer believes, it should be perfectly possible to develop "common carriage", allowing competitors to supply water within the franchise of an existing operator. Great. So we can look forward to the type of competition that already exists in telecommunications and is fast being developed for gas and electricity, can we? Well, not quite. Common carriage is to be confined initially to customers using 250 megallitres of water a year or more - that's only about 600 nationwide. And in practice using alternative water suppliers is only likely to be economic for those located

close to the borders of the present water regions, reducing the number of potential beneficiaries still further.

With all the other monopoly utilities, competition has begun with big industrial users and only slowly progressed to domestic customers. But if Mr Gummer really believes this experience can be repeated with water, he's living in cloud-cuckoo land. For competition to work in any meaningful way would require the development of a national grid similar to the one that exists for gas, electricity and telecommunications. The Government has already examined the feasibility of such a project and found it to be uneconomic, both in terms of construction and running costs.

Furthermore, the ecological effect of digging up the land and diverting water on the scale required make it extremely unlikely except in the case of persistent drought conditions that such a thing could ever be sanctioned. For most industries, dynamic competition will always be the best safeguard against abuse. But for water, tough and effective regulation remains the only realistic option.

Triumphalism at Lille backfires

By any standards, Britain's performance at the G7 jobs summit in Lille yesterday was a lamentable one. Ministers were hop-

ing the event would provide further international acclaim for Britain's model of a deregulated labour market. With even the Germans and French coming round to the view that deregulation creates jobs, it was not an unreasonable thing to expect.

But as so often occurs at events of this sort these days, ministers managed to undermine support for their position with an uncompromising and ridiculously triumphant approach to the problem.

The clash that emerged was not so much over the rights and wrongs of a deregulated labour market as about degree. To the Europeans, unfettered deregulation ignores the need to remedy the social exclusion resulting from unemployment. It also raises the risk of an unacceptable beggar my neighbour to lower living standards between countries.

To complete the rift, Britain's European partners have the single currency on their minds. They suspect Britain will use its social chapter and single currency opt out to take advantage of low standards, low wages and a low exchange rate, giving it an unfair edge within Europe.

The Government's dismissive reaction to these fears is a product of its strategy for dealing with the issue of job insecurity in Lille. Officials were handing out a Department for Employment and Education pro-

paganda document which stretched credibility about the Government's record on jobs through its selective presentation of the facts. The Japanese and Americans, with considerably lower unemployment, managed more subtle diplomacy.

More than that, the British refusal to accept that its partners might have a point, and engage in discussion about it, undermines the value of the most important economic policy forum. It will eventually marginalise our influence. Although all those present in Lille have an eye on their domestic audience, most did not feel compelled to sacrifice genuine discussion at the altar of party politics.

Greed could still short-circuit electricity

The only thing that now looks like short-circuiting a further round of consolidation in the electricity industry is an outbreak of excessive greed at Midlands Electricity and Southern Electric or pusillanimity on the part of PowerGen and National Power. These being privatised utilities, neither eventually can be ruled out entirely. But if the script goes to plan then the Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, should clear the bids by the generators for the two regional electricity companies.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission delivered its verdict last Friday and the betting in the market is for clearance sub-

ject to certain conditions. Ministers may, understandably, be wary about endorsing anything that smacks of concentration of power in the sector, having broken the link between generation and supply when the industry was privatised.

But they conceded the principle of vertical integration when they allowed Scottish Power to buy Manweb.

And they further weakened their case when they agreed to let Hanson first buy Eastern Electricity and then start acquiring power stations from the two big generators.

The case against permitting the two latest mergers is that National Power and PowerGen would be able to rig the electricity pool, the wholesale market for England and Wales, and exert undue influence on the market for contracts between generators and suppliers. Both these objections can be met by legally binding undertakings.

The bigger issue for ministers to address is what shape they want the industry in as it heads towards full competition in 1998. The consumer is more likely to be better protected by four or five large integrated players slugging it out for their business than by a larger number of independent RECs with a vested interest in sitting on their local monopolies.

Midlands and Southern could spoil it all by demanding that their suitors come back with unacceptable prices. But if that were to happen they would be as much the losers as the two generators.

BET starts week of crucial talks to woo investors

RUSSELL HOTTEN

BET begins a round of crucial meetings with institutional investors this week in a bid to reverse a growing belief in the city that Rentokil is close to winning its £1.9bn takeover.

John Clark, BET chief executive, hopes he can stop the steady selling of the company's shares which has depressed the price and left it stubbornly just above the value of Rentokil's offer.

BET's advisers are believed to feel frustrated that the "positive news" contained in its defence documents has yet to be fully understood by the institutions.

Fidelity, which owned more than 5 per cent of BET at the start of the bid, is thought to have reduced its holding of 50 million shares to 18 million.

"Fidelity is selling a million every other day. That is why the price is depressed," one BET source said.

Fidelity is believed to have bought its shares for around 90p-100p, and has been making a big profit on the sales.

Arbitrageurs from America are said to have been heavy buyers of the shares being sold by London institutions.

With BET shares at 204p, up 1p yesterday, they remain about 1p above Rentokil's cash and shares offer, an indication that



Promises: Clive Thompson remains unimpressed

BET believes its lacklustre share price is not the issue at this stage in the bid. "This is just the beginning for us. The important thing is now to get around the institutions," a spokesman said.

Rentokil yesterday said it had received acceptances totalling 3.42 per cent. Clive Thompson, chief executive, said: "Rentokil's offer for BET is now entering its closing stages. During the past six weeks BET has made a number of statements, further promises, and has used the occasion to launch this season's new spring structure. We at Rentokil have not been impressed."

But Rentokil believes BET has very little left in its defence to convince shareholders of its case. BET yesterday issued a dividend forecast for next year of at least a 20 per cent growth to 6.15p. This follows the 5.1p already forecast for the current financial year, which ended on Friday.

Rentokil said the forecast had little credibility, as it was the current board that cut the dividend in 1992 and 1993, despite promises to the contrary. BET said the company was being restructured in the early 1990s but was now on a growth path.

BET has until Friday, day 39 of the bid, to publish any further information material to its defence.

Fifield sells Thorn-EMI options before demerger

MATHEW HORSMAN and RUSSELL HOTTEN

James Fifield, the millionaire senior executive at Thorn-EMI, has made £1.3m on share options in advance of the demerger of the company this summer.

Mr Fifield exercised options on 139,000 shares, roughly a third of those over which he

holds rights, on Friday, according to a statement made to the Stock Exchange. Mr Fifield, who is president of EMI, the music business, was paid salary and bonuses last year of £6.4m.

A Thorn EMI spokesman said Mr Fifield "had the opportunity to exercise his options under existing arrangements and elected to do so".

The company's remuneration committee is considering how to roll over current options once the demerger of the rentals and music company is completed.

Thereafter, executives will be provided with a new performance-related scheme.

Sir Colin Southgate, the company chairman, has options worth about £5.6m at last night's price of 1705p.

Separately, Martin Edwards,

chief executive of Manchester United Football Club, made £2.1m after it was disclosed yesterday that he had sold 1.27 per cent of the company.

His wife, who was among several other United investors to sell shares, made almost £950,000 after disposing of 0.57 per cent of her holding.

Mr Edwards, who on Sunday watched his team beat Chelsea to go through to the FA Cup Final, said the couple's sales were for private reasons and he refused to comment further.

He now holds 23.2 per cent of the club, which last week announced half-year profits of £15.3m.

Mr Edwards sold 785,000 shares at 270p, while his wife sold 350,726 at the same price.

United's share price rose 2p to close at 294p yesterday.

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Giant-size: Staff at the world's biggest bank which opened yesterday Photograph: AP

Japanese banking giant pledges to lead reform

Tokyo (Reuters) - The world's largest bank was yesterday born in Japan, and pledged to act as a stabilising force in the nation's shaky banking system and lead reform of lending practices in the industry.

Taneko Wakai, chairman of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, said his bank would use its position to help ensure that the excesses of Japan's late Eighties "bubble economy", which saddled banks with huge debts from over-aggressive property lending, were not repeated.

"The banking industry must change its behaviour, such as lending heavily to a single sector or doing things just because other members of the industry have done them," Mr Wakai said.

He added: "We must establish procedures that will prevent

a recurrence of what happened in the bubble economy."

The merger of Mitsubishi Bank and Bank of Tokyo, formally completed on Monday, created the world's highest bank in terms of its assets, which totalled \$77,500bn (£47.4bn).

Industry analysts said the merger could put additional pressure on other Japanese banks to seek marriages as deregulation and bad debt problems threaten a shake-out.

The merger also coincided with two other big mergers in the US. Chase Manhattan Corp merged on Sunday with Chemical Bank Corp to create the largest US bank, with assets of \$305bn (£200bn), and yesterday saw San Francisco-based Wells Fargo and Co team up with First Interstate Bancorp.

Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi,

which combines Mitsubishi's powerful domestic network and Bank of Tokyo's strong international operations, will tower over most domestic rivals in size and quality, analysts said.

Before the merger, Mitsubishi and Bank of Tokyo were separately rated single A plus.

The new bank said it would start operations with about 21,000 employees, 366 domestic branches including headquarters and other outlets, and 83 overseas branches and representative offices.

Cutting staff and redundant operations is expected to be one key to boosting the bank's profitability and deriving benefits from the merger.

Last month, bank officials said they would consider cutting some 2,000 jobs over three years.

IN BRIEF

• Aetna Life & Casualty of the US announced plans to pay \$8.9bn in cash and shares for US Healthcare to create the largest managed healthcare provider in the country. The combined group will have 10.3 million managed-care members, compared with 9.5 million for United HealthCare, which will move into second place. The new company will provide some type of health care to about one in 12 Americans. As well as health, the activities of the new business will provide life and disability insurance. Last November, Aetna announced the sale of its property and casualty business to Travelers Group for \$4bn.

• The Gas Consumers Council called for tough regulatory controls on "doorstep marketing techniques" following fresh complaints from customers in the south west, where competition begins later this month. The GCC said the latest allegations are of bad practice by Calor Tex in marketing gas contracts to customers. The company, which the GCC said has now acted to resolve any problem, is alleged to have badged its salespeople as independent advisors recommending Calor Tex as a best buy.

• Rhne-Poulenc Rorer has sold Fisons' scientific instruments business for \$272m. Thermo Instruments Systems of the US is buying the largest part of the division, with the rest sold to a financial group affiliated to Schroder Ventures. The consideration comprises cash of \$230m and debt of \$35.9m. The French RPR took over Fisons, a British pharmaceutical group, last year.

• Mitsubishi Electric plans to enlarge its UK workforce by 400 over the next five years, with new jobs at its computer assembly plant in Glenrothes, Scotland, and at its Birmingham research centre. The number of jobs at Glenrothes, which produces Apricot personal computers, will double to 600.

• ICI has sold its half share in Teesside Gas Transportation to its joint venture partner, Enron Europe. Price was not disclosed, but ICI said it had made a small gain on the transaction.

Current Savings Rates.

From close of business on 1st April 1996 the following rates of interest are applicable to the accounts set out below:

	RATE PER ANNUM	GROSS %	NET %
60 Day Notice Account** - Paid Annually			
£50,000+	5.00	4.00	
£25,000-49,999	4.75	3.80	
£10,000-24,999	4.25	3.40	
£5,000-9,999	3.50	2.80	
£500-4,999	3.15	2.52	
£1-499	0.50	0.40	
60 Day Notice Account** - Paid Monthly			
£50,000+	4.00	3.20	
£25,000-49,999	3.75	3.00	
£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60	
£5,000-9,999	2.50	2.00	
£500-4,999	2.15	1.72	
£1-499	0.50	0.40	
Flexible Savings Account			
£50,000+	4.00	3.20	
£25,000-49,999	3.75	3.00	
£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60	
£5,000-9,999	2.75	2.20	
£500-4,999	2.65	2.12	
£1,000-1,999	2.55	2.04	
£500-999	2.45	1.96	
£1-499	0.50	0.40	
Interest Cheque Account			
£10,000+	1.75	1.40	
£5,000-9,999	0.50	0.40	
£1-4,999	0.25	0.20	
FirstSave			
	3.00	2.40	
Student Interest Cheque			
	3.00	2.40	

TSB We want you to say YES

All rates are variable. Interest paid annually unless otherwise stated. *Gross rate does not take account of the deduction of income tax at the Lower Rate of 20%. Interest payable before 6th April 1996 will be subject to income tax at 25%.

**Sixty days notice of withdrawal required or equivalent loss of interest on amount withdrawn, unless the remaining balance is £5,000.00 or more.

TSB Bank plc, Victoria House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BZ.

Strong dollar helps Nikkei to a four-year high

Share prices in Tokyo yesterday ended at a four-year high and analysts predicted that the bull run, which has seen the Nikkei 225 surge by 50 per cent since last summer, will continue for the next three months at least.

The Nikkei 225 index closed up 153.54 at 21,560.39, helped by the continuing strengthening of the dollar and in anticipation of a fresh wave of investment in the market.

Brokers believe the Nikkei is headed firmly towards 23,000, a level last seen in 1991.

Share prices are being

buoyed by a steady improvement in the economy. The corporate earnings outlook is also positive. The Nikkei 225 rose 7.7 per cent alone in the first quarter of this year, and by 32.6 per cent in the financial year which ended on 31 March.

Analysts said earnings forecasts, due in May, would play a key role in deciding the stance of investors towards the market. "Investors will buy on year to March 1997 earnings forecasts," said Tim Hayashida, strategist at Merrill Lynch, which has a "bullish view" on corporate re-

sults. He added that positive earnings prospects should help the Nikkei 225 rally in the second quarter, and head towards the 24,000 point level by the third quarter.

Corporate results for the year just ended were not expected to cause a sell-off of stocks, with investors having already discounted much of the "likely damage to profits from bad debt write-offs" in the bank and related sectors.

The steady recovery in the economy should also lift the market, analysts said. "We are

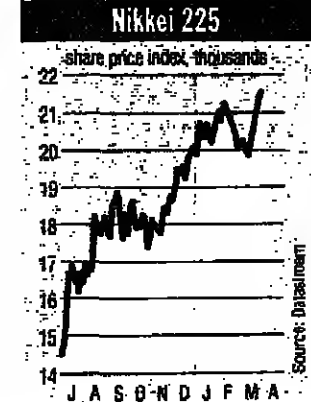
expecting positive indicators on the macro-economy in the first half of the year (to March 1997), in part on a rebound from last year when the strong yen adversely affected the economy," said Satoru Ishihara, manager of investment information at Yamaichi Securities.

Public works spending is likely to play a key role in the recovery in the six months to September, Mr Hayashida said. "The economy itself is on a recovery track although [progress is] slow, and interest rates are unlikely to rise sharply, with 3.5

per cent remaining the maximum for the long-term bond yield in calendar 1996."

Another positive trading incentive may come from the yen continuing to ease against the dollar in foreign exchange trading. Analysts said the trend in the foreign exchange would probably remain positive for the stock market and trigger renewed buying interest in high-technology issues.

The easing of the yen against the dollar should mean optimism for earnings of export-dependent electricals.



business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Burmah looks East for markets with promise

Burmah can't quite believe how lucky it was to get out of petrol retailing in the middle of last year, just before the blood started splashing on the forecourts. Persuading James Frost to hand over £83m for a business on the brink of a ruinous price war was a triumph of timing.

The withdrawal from fuels, now more or less completed by recent deals in Turkey and Sweden, was a useful piece of good news in what was something of a curate's egg of a set of results. The Castrol juggernaut continues its relentless progress and the ill-fated 1990 acquisition of chemicals business Fosco finally seems to be coming right, but elsewhere there are worrying signs of slowdown in the mature economies of the West.

The good news, however, outweighed the nagging doubts and, as a result, profits for 1995 emerged yesterday higher than expected at £253m, up 15 per cent. The share price, which has enjoyed a good run so far this year, nudged 10p higher to 1.067p. At that level it has more than doubled since the beginning of 1992.

The Castrol success story continues, with volumes rising 5 per cent around the world despite total market growth of only about 1 per cent. Profits grew even faster, by 13 per cent to just over £200m as existing customers were persuaded to trade up to higher-margin synthetic oils.

The real attraction of Castrol is its strong toe-hold in the developing markets of the Far East, where volumes increased by an impressive 20 per cent during the year, compared with flat sales in Europe and even a slight decline in the US. With estimates of GNP growth in the mature G7 economies now little more than a pedestrian 2 per cent, the Asia story takes on an even greater urgency.

Chemicals profits continued the impressive recovery from the recession, the length and intensity of which caught everyone, Burmah included, napping. Profits of £62.4m were 28 per cent better than in 1994 and stripping out reorganisation costs taken against the profit and loss account, the underlying return on sales is now 9 per cent, within a whisker of the targeted 10 per cent margin.

Burmah is a good long-term investment for anyone who takes the view that the economic future lies in Asia. If the growing

middle classes of India and China take to the motor car with anything like the alacrity of their Western counterparts, this is a growth story with years still to run.

In the short run, however, the shares appear to have caught up with the good news. On the basis of pre-tax profits of £145m this year, the shares stand on a prospective p/e ratio of 15. At a premium to the market, they are now high enough.

L&M plays to its strengths

The insurance industry has been up against it recently, so it was no surprise that London & Manchester's superficially impressive 5.3 per cent increase in distributable profits from £33.6m to £35.7m, relied heavily on investment income and other non-trading factors.

The underlying picture, showing a drop in new life annual premium income of 37 per cent, and a slide in single premiums of 57 per cent is more meaningful, if worrying.

The outlook is pretty gloomy on the pensions side, too - new single premium business reduced by 25 per cent to £32.7m even if existing savers are putting more into their plans than before.

Despite the gloomy numbers for new premium income, L&M remains fairly optimistic. The company has slashed its fixed operating costs by 24 per cent, part of a reorganisation that has seen it lose a fifth of head office staff in the past year and the fall in income, which has continued in the first months of this year, will be righted, the company claims, once its 700-strong sales team is reshaped into 18 new business centres.

L&M has signalled its intention to stick to its core business areas, and last year sold its residential mortgage company, netting a £7.3m profit into the bargain. The previous year, the company disposed of its consumer finance and commercial property services operations.

True, its loss-making estate agency chain - which dropped another £2.6m last year - will not go.

But if predictions of a recovery in the

housing market prove to be correct, this may turn out to be a wise move. In any event, the company's 78 branches contributed 13 per cent of its premium income so it can justify its existence through cross-selling alone.

By playing to its strengths in its bottom-end socio-economic niche, L&M claims not only to be a viable player but even to be on the look-out for potential acquisition targets with a distribution strategy similar to its own.

With a market capitalisation of only £500m, that may be wishful thinking but the shares could be buoyed by the prospect of corporate activity the other way round. Even if takeover speculation proves unfounded, a dividend of 18.7p, up 9 per cent, means L&M is yielding a reasonably attractive 5.6 per cent. That will underpin the shares.

Ulster TV bid looks a long shot

Tiny Ulster TV has, probably undeservedly, ridden the takeover rumour wave in the ITV sector with gusto, rising from 900p a share last November, when the Government promised further deregulation of the commercial TV sector, to nearly 1,400p last night.

In fact, the company, with revenues of just £34.2m, is an unlikely candidate for a bid. It controls the ITV licence for Northern Ireland, and as such does not have any of the existing ITV regions, where logic might dictate some consolidation.

True, there is a chance that a "Celtic alliance" involving Scottish TV, Ulster and HTV could still emerge once the ownership limits are lifted later this year, but the chances must be considered slim.

Sensibly, the company has decided to give some of its cash pile back to shareholders in the form of a special dividend of £1 a share, or £10m, unveiled yesterday. That sent the shares up 85p to close at 1380p.

The extra cash became available once Ulster decided against bidding for a northern Irish cable licence, in league with UK cable giant Telewest. The company has kept back some money to help finance its 43 per cent shareholding in TV3, the proposed new channel for Ireland, and to pay for its share of ITV's commitment to digital terrestrial television.

Repaying shareholders is no doubt a good thing. All the same, one wonders whether there might have been better uses for the cash. The company's core business, its ITV broadcasting activities, are likely to encounter sluggish growth of 3 per cent this year. TV3 is still a year and half away, and won't be profitable straight away.

As well, there is still doubt about the future of funding arrangements in the ITV sector, where small regional players such as Ulster are currently subsidised by the well-capitalised giants. That could change down the road.

Ulster is likely to report lower pre-tax profits this year of perhaps £7.8m, next to £8.2m this year, putting it on a price 27 times currently earnings. Expensive if no takeover bid is in prospect.

English cricket awaits Tesco man

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

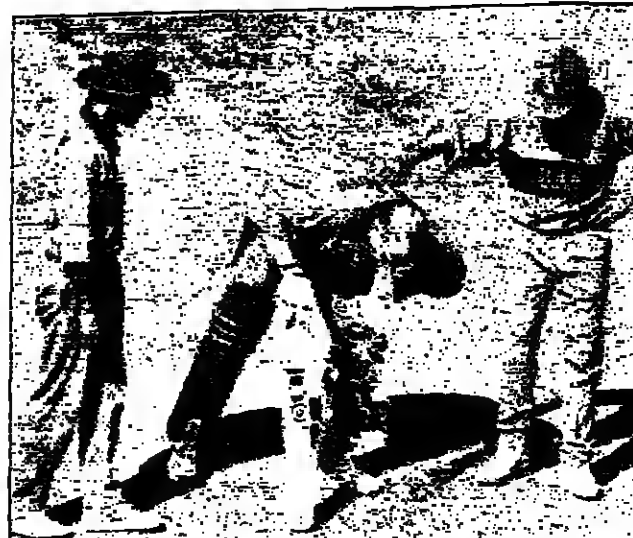
The long nightmare of English cricket may be turning into a bright new dawn if Sir Ian MacLaurin, chairman of Tesco, has anything to do with it. Sir Ian is due to retire from the helm in June next year when he reaches 60, and being a fan, permanently tanned chap it is unsurprising that he is already mapping out new things to do. While he has had "loads of approaches" from other businesses, he wants to apply his experience to the world of politics and the world of cricket. As far as politics is concerned, Sir Ian, who joined Tesco as a management trainee in 1959, has no ambition to become an MP. He would like however to apply his considerable skills to raising money for the Conservative Party. His other great ambition is to revive England's national game. He is already a member of the MMC and the Lords Taverners. So move over Illingworth, MacLaurin's coming.

Good to see that Great British traditions of service are being maintained at Next. Its High Holborn

branch in central London has a sign for opening times over the Easter period which says: "Good Friday - closed. Easter Sunday - closed. Easter Monday - closed. We look forward to seeing you. Not at Easter, obviously."

How fitting that the horse drawn in the office sweepstake for the Grand National by Mike Grant, treasurer of Eurotunnel, was called "Into the Red". The horse, rated three-to-one, did manage to finish, but not in the money. Rather like Eurotunnel.

Mick Hucknall, the carrot-haired lead singer of mega-popular Simply Red, has placed an order for the new MGF 1.8i VVC, a nifty new convertible sports car from Rover which harks back to the classic British MG. The car company made most of the fact yesterday, sending us a pic of the star with the car. The accompanying blurb reads: "The portfolio of songs produced by Simply Red identify a spirit similar to those of the MGF: Fairground, Remembering the First Time, Stars... etc." No



Ailing at the crease: Neil Smith during a World Cup low point

mention of the car's price though, which suggests another of the group's lists: "Money's Too Tight to Mention."

Cable & Wireless middle managers can breathe a sigh of relief. Despite all the hubbalo about the talks with BT, the managers' two weeks jamboree, sorry, training programme, in the charming surrounds of Fontainebleau will go ahead after Easter as planned. C&W also confirmed yesterday that Mercury's twice yearly management knees-up in Birmingham today and tomorrow

is similarly unaffected. BT-style cost-cutting is still some way off, thank goodness.

Jonathan Fry, chief executive of Burmah Castrol, delighted a mixed group of journalists yesterday when talking about a joint venture in Turkey. "This is a good thing, as Turkey seems to be getting its act together - and will do even more so when it gets a man for a prime minister." This statement was met with a stunned silence. Mr Fry added: "You'd better strike that from the record." Too late.

ML marketing deal abandoned

MAGNUS GRIMOND

ML Laboratories, one of the UK's fledgling hi-tech companies, has failed to reach a crucial marketing deal for its local dialysis market.

The German healthcare group Fresenius, currently in the midst of a US acquisition which will make it the largest player in the peritoneal dialysis market, announced yesterday that it was ending its existing tie-up with ML after it had been unable to agree terms on a master agreement by the 31 March deadline. Two other healthcare firms are already thought to have rebuffed the British group in its attempts to forge marketing links.

ML's shares fell 13p to 428p after yesterday's news and are now well below the all-time high of 472p at the end of January when co-founder Kevin Leech sold part of his stake for £37.5m. The break-down of talks comes nearly 21 months after ML announced it had formed a partnership deal with Fresenius in June 1994. The original intention had been for Fresenius to handle marketing of local, one of ML's most promising products, in the UK, the rest of Europe and the US, including the establishment of joint venture companies here and in Germany.

But ML yesterday played down the impact of the failure of the initial talks. In a statement, the group said ML and Fresenius "are well advanced in discussions regarding alternative forms of collaboration and are seeking to reach an agreement relating to the peritoneal dialysis market in both Europe and the USA within the next few months with a view to launching local in Europe later this year". A spokesman emphasised that talks were continuing.

The latest blow to hopes of reaching a deal on local dialysis follows several years in which ML is said to have attempted to find a partner to market the treatment. The market leaders in peritoneal dialysis, US giant Baxter International and Gambro of Sweden, are already thought to have turned it down. In the case of Gambro, it is thought ML was asking for better terms than the Swedish company was able to offer.

Icodial, which is already being used in the UK, could potentially take half the market for dialysis, currently worth around £800m a year. But it has been eclipsed by recent news that ML has reached deals with Medeva for its dry powder inhaler device and with Glaxo Wellcome for slow release drug delivery technology.

IN BRIEF

• Macallan-Glenlivet is recommending a 15 per cent dividend increase for the year to December to reflect its confidence that 1996 will show advances in all areas of its whisky business. Profits in the year increased 6 per cent to £7.01m despite a fall in sales of new whisky to other blenders and the cost of changing a distributor in an unnamed overseas market. Earnings per share of 4.87p (4.12p) allowed a total dividend for the year of 1.46p.

• Dealings in Orange shares held by private investors starts today a week after trading started for institutions. Small investor dealings were delayed after the offer was scaled back to allow shareholders to be notified of the size of their holdings. Orange, placed at 205p, raced to an immediate premium last week and closed yesterday at 225.5p.

• Lord Rees-Mogg, the IBC chairman, said 1995 was another excellent year for supplier of business information. While it was too early to forecast this year's performance, he said 1996 had started well. After a 24 per cent rise in turnover to £97m, operating profits were 19 per cent better at £12.8m. The dividend jumped 23 per cent to 8p for the year, up from 6.5p.

• Capita said its managed services operation had won a seven-year, £72m contract to administer the teachers' superannuation scheme in England and Wales. The TSS is a statutory, unfunded pension scheme administered by an agency of the Department for Employment and Education.

• Outdoor advertising group Maiden is to float on the stock market "in the near future", the company said yesterday. The group, where profits have risen 77 per cent since a 1993 management buyout, should be valued at about £65m.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Afrasia Laker (F)	58.5m (46.7m)	-1.9m (0.94m)	-34.70p (8.14p)	nil (0.5p)
Burmah Castrol (F)	3,000m (2,930m)	253m (244m)	86.9p (88.4p)	36.25p (30p)
Freemove Estates (F)	62.2m (53.2m)	6.81m (7.2m)	7.1p (10.4p)	4.1p (4p)
IBC Group (F)	97.0m (77.6m)	12.4m (10.1m)	25.6p (20.4p)	8p (6.5p)
London & Manchester (F)	-	57.11m (14.0m)	36.8p (3.3p)	18.7p (17.16p)
Pharmaceutical Research (H)	12.1m (7.34m)	-20.3m (1.04m)	-35.41p (1.82p)	nil (-)
Shorpe & Pither (F)	63.5m (64.4m)	3.83m (4.4m)	12.2p (14p)	5.2p (5p)
Ulster TV (F)	34.2m (31.4m)	8.2m (7.49m)	51.77p (48.16p)	22.5p (20p)

(F) - Full (H) - Interim (F) - 12 months, comparatives 14 months

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a completely new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

in Today

Tony Blair and Bill Clinton: are they destined for a special relationship? Global warming and you: man made perils that will affect us all. The new Family Life section looks into how to backpack without tears. Do we need... Dennis the Menace: Jim White conducts a personal investigation into whether there is a place in the modern world for the classical naughty boy. Julie Myerson meanwhile takes her naughty boy to the

on Tuesday

Part three of The Scorched Earth: how do we slow down the global warming process? Plus: Health - the mother of a brain-injured teenager

on Wednesday

Theatre: "Jekyll: the musical" opened in Bromley last week. What are the chances of a West End transfer. We talk to the backers and review the show. Plus: midweek travel section, your money, finance and law.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education and graduate

on Friday

24Seven - a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section, including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

hairdressers. Plus Network: the complete PC guide. and a Sport

A 24-page section with all the action from a big weekend of sport. Plus: The Monday interview: Vicente Modahl on masterminding Diane's redemption. The Grand National: the agony of the waiting game. And it's an all-red FA Cup Final, Liverpool vs Manchester United, dream or nightmare?

is convinced she has found a treatment to help her son. Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 104 1/2 inches

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



APR 2 1996

International trade: Britain throws weight behind world-wide revolt by America's trading partners against legislation aimed at ousting Castro

Blockade of Cuban sugar triggers company rethink

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

British companies are urgently reviewing their business activities in Cuba, and stepping up lobbying against the blockade imposed by America.

ED & F Man, the big sugar trader, said the embargo was already causing problems, obliging it to consider what can be done with our involvement in Cuba.

BAT, which a year ago opened the first joint venture with a state-owned cigarette manufacturer in Cuba, said it was exercising all potential for lobbying and monitoring the underlying political circumstances.

Through Foreign Office pressure, as well as lobbyists and lawyers in Washington, Britain is throwing its weight into a full-scale international revolt, involving mainly Canada, Mexico and the European Union, against a new law aimed at squeezing Cuban leader Fidel Castro from power.

The so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Bur-

ton bill, is complex and ambiguous and there is widespread uncertainty about exactly what it will mean for those doing business in Cuba or considering investment.

But alarm at implications that appear to be potentially devastating, and anger at what is seen to have been a flouting of principles, pushed Washington's big trading allies to align themselves with Cuba and attack the law as a violation of world trade rules at the latest Geneva session of the Council on Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organisation.

Mr Clinton himself had vehemently opposed the law, sponsored by strongly anti-Castro Republican congressmen Jesse Helms and Dan Burton, until Cuban Mig fighter planes shot down two civilian light aircraft flown by Cuban Americans over the Florida Straits last month.

Unfettered by one eye, or both, on the key Florida vote in November's presidential election, he changed tack, signed the bill and said he hoped a squeeze on foreign investors would finally bring Mr Castro down.

That brought him the hoped-for acclaim from Florida's hundreds of thousands of influential Cuban exiles but, in reality, numerous ambiguities, loopholes and provisos added by White House aides mean the new law may have little real effect.

Essentially, the law discourages foreign investors in Cuba by facing them with the possibility of law suits from Cuban exiles. Cuban Americans can sue in US courts for compensation for property or land confiscated after Mr Castro's 1959 revolution and later bought by foreign companies.

Miami lawyers estimate claims could reach a total of about \$100bn (£65.5bn). It would also bar executives or controlling shareholders of foreign companies involved in any such confiscated Cuban property from entering the US.

That is the theoretical bad news for the 225 companies from 50 countries involved in joint ventures with Mr Castro's communist regime, among them 15 or so British firms, as well as potential investors such as Tate and Lyle.



Battlegrounds drawn: Fidel Castro (left) has won international support against Bill Clinton's campaign to force Cuban sugar off world markets

Theoretical, because the good news may not only outweigh but erase the bad. For one thing, the law refers to "after the enactment of this act," apparently exempting existing investors. Secondly, Cuban Americans will be able to sue only foreign companies that have subsidiaries or holdings in the US. That rules out many, if not most of them. Thirdly, in reality few foreign companies are thought to own Cuban property. In most joint ventures, the foreign companies use factories, land or property owned by the Cuban state, such

as all 175 sugar mills. (Although Cuban exiles may dispute that ownership, it would not legally affect the foreign investor.)

As if all that were not enough to calm the nerves of potential investors, Mr Clinton insisted on a clause saying the President can veto all law suits for periods of six months at a time if he considers such a move "in the national interest".

That gives Mr Clinton plenty of leeway if he wins in November. If the Republican contender is victorious, the veto is more likely to be ignored.

In terms of loopholes, the law is a veritable Emmentaler cheese and is already being dubbed by hand-wringing Miami lawyers as the Full Employment for Lawyers act.

On Capitol Hill, it has also been dubbed the Barchard act and that brings us to yet another proviso which will be welcomed by foreign investors and reveals much as to the law's true aims and origins.

Only those Cubans whose land, property or business was worth more than \$50,000 dollars when confiscated (mostly in the

years following 1959) have the right to sue.

That was a lot of pesos at the time and rules out the vast majority of Cuban exiles, mostly farmers or small businessmen.

It also weighs the bill heavily in favour of giant enterprises such as the Barchard rum company, now Bermuda-based with a subsidiary in the US, and families such as the Fanjul, who once had vast sugar holdings in Cuba.

The Barchard family estimates its distillery, breweries and real estate in Cuba were worth \$76m

when confiscated by Mr Castro in 1960. Wealthy enough to have already had US citizenship by then, they will no doubt be suing pronto.

As it happens, Barchard co-hosted a Miami fund-raiser for the bill's co-sponsor, Senator Helms, last year and a Barchard lawyer at first claimed to have helped draft the legislation before later opting for a more discreet silence.

And speaking of Barchard, with many leaks, the "Liberty act" may be on the rocks before Mr Castro.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot
US	1.2594	11.6	22.9	1000	0.6742
Canada	2.1670	11.3	13.5	1000	0.1938
Germany	2.2322	54.4	57.4	143.22	10.76
France	17.023	140.19	371.40	504.09	64.57
Italy	229.53	70.19	321.46	568.0	57.44
Japan	164.01	75.70	225.28	105.3	136.33
ECU	12.91	5.1	45.40	12.92	7.8
Belgium	24.34	12.9	34.29	20.48	58.48
Denmark	6.72	3.9	10.4	175.25	3.892
Netherlands	25.13	63.54	188.75	155.95	32.29
Ireland	0.9696	9.5	25.20	157.29	3.4
Norway	9.8287	16.64	229.23	64.43	42.17
Spain	19.07	39.48	107.14	24.67	32.38
Sweden	13.81	9.7	24.54	6.694	98.123
Switzerland	182.36	89.40	187.95	139.25	101.05
Australia	1.9401	20.31	67.45	17.78	19.21
Hong Kong	11.736	101.61	224.70	12.43	2.12
Malaysia	3.8607	0.0	0.0	2.530	4.4
New Zealand	2.2228	14.57	33.56	14.96	30.32
Saudi Arabia	5.7206	0.0	0.0	3.7506	2.567
Singapore	2.1458	0.0	0.0	1.407	41.30

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.252	0.9997
Australia	1.5307	1.0302
Canada	1.5071	0.6742
China	12.760	0.3339
Egypt	5.2465	3.4404
Finland	7.0673	4.6322
France	16.590	5.6890
Germany	3.6898	24.730
Greece	315.382	34.020
India	4.573	0.2897

Forward rates quoted high to low are as a discount; subject from spot rate to spot rate.
 *Rate quoted low to high are as a premium.
 †Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 ‡Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 §Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 ¶Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 **Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 ***Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 ****Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.
 *****Rate quoted low to high are as a discount.

Interest Rates

UK	600%	Germany	300%	US	875%	Japan	500%
Prime	5.75	Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.00%
Intervention	3.80%	Canada	5.00%	Canada	5.00%	Canada	5.00%
Discount	9.00%	Denmark	5.50%	10-Day Repo	8.05%	Switzerland	1.50%
Advances	3.00%	Discount	3.75%	Repo (Fwd)	7.80%	Lombard	4.25%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr
UK	8.00%	7.44	6.18	6.08	Netherlands	9.00	8.05	6.05	6.37
US	5.75	6.08	5.76	5.31	Spain	10.75	9.12	10.75	9.37
Japan	6.4%	1.05	1.05	1.05	Italy	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75
Australia	8.75	6.4%	6.75	6.75	Sweden	7.75	5.4%	6.75	6.75
Germany	5.75	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	Switzerland	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
France	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	ECU (Fwd)	9.75	6.3%	7.75	7.03

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	1.6%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Local Authority	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
Discount Market	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Treasury Bill (Fwd)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Dollar Bill	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
ECU Unit Dep	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%

Tourist Rates

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
SP 500 Cos Avgn	233.80	233.50	0.00	Hang Kong Index	65.9023	65.9223	4.00

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Call (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229

Life FT-SE Index Option

Series	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Call (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229

Energy

Brent Crude	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Call (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229

Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Call (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Jan 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Feb 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Mar 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (Apr 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Call (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229
Long Put (May 96)	105.09	105.10	104.25	36229

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
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ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
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ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc	100.00	100.00	6.25	Long Term	100.00	100.00	6.25
ALFA Equity & Low Unit Managers				Managed Fund	75.50	82.25	6.25	PP 3000 Acc							

Caulfield clearly not just along for the ride

They handed out plenty of awards at the Jockeys' Association dinner on Sunday night, and later in the year there will be recognition for owners, trainers, stable staff and even racing journalists. There is only one group in racing, it seems, where no one ever hands out prizes — those brave men and women from special interest groups who labour in the unforgiving world of racing politics.

But then, perhaps such an award would prove somewhat futile, with one name in particular either on the trophy or the shortlist, year after year. In the turf was fought to win the hearts and minds of the industry, no-one puts a case — or, some might say, thumps a tub — quite like Michael Caulfield, secretary of the Jockeys' Association and the driving force behind Sunday's ceremonies.

Caulfield is into his eighth year at the JA, which, as he admits, "would have been long odds-against when I took the job as I was so inexperienced".

The son of a leading judge, he adopted much of the adversarial attitude of the courtroom in his early dealings with the Jockey Club, perhaps as a cloak for his greenness. For a while, the mere mention of his name could reduce a Club steward to the sort of affronted apoplexy which his grandfather might have suffered when the grouse beaters asked for a pay rise.

With time and experience, the Red Mike image has slowly diminished, but Caulfield remains keenly aware of who is paying his wages. "I had some

Greg Wood on a man who led jockeys into becoming a fresh force for change

great rows with the Jockey Club in the late 80s and early 90s," he says, "but now I know that they value the Association's judgement. What I am rigorous in my defence of the people who employ me. They deserve strong representation and that's what they get."

The Association and its secretary deserve much of the credit for recent changes to the disciplinary system, which should put an end to the anomaly which allowed riders to receive long suspensions for very minor infringements.

Other successes, though, received far less publicity. "When I took over in 1988, Peter Scudamore told me that racecourse medical services should be the No 1 priority," Caulfield says.

"After excessive lobbying, every course now has two fully-trained paramedics with fully equipped ambulances, and I think it's fair to say they have been life-saving."

"You can look back at Declan Murphy's terrible accident, and the paramedics were there. I remember the tragic events involving Ayrton Senna on the same weekend, and the whole of motor-racing had to have a

massive inquiry into safety and what was going wrong. We've had tragic accidents, but we know everything has been done to protect the sportsman."

At 34, Caulfield is, for now, within roughly the same age group as his members. Slowly, though, a new generation is replacing riders such as Richard Dunwoody, now a close friend with whom Caulfield has grown up in his job, and it looks no coincidence that his latest project is to address the opportunities, or lack of them, open to retiring riders.

"JETS," the Jockeys' Employment Training Scheme, is modelled on the impressive scheme run by the Professional Footballers' Association.

"Jockeys are going back to school to do GCSEs, A-levels and degrees, to either keep them in the industry in good jobs when they give up riding, or get them jobs in other walks of life. It will hopefully become the most important thing we've done."

Amid all this effort, Caulfield still finds time — indeed, makes time — to play football and rugby, while the decision not to stage the Glastonbury Festival this year will leave a large hole

in his diary. "Racing can become all-consuming," he says, "and the people can be very insular. You need to keep in touch with other walks of life, and I think I've got it in perspective now."

Caulfield also grabbed the chance, two years ago, to ride in public for the first time, in a celebrity event. "I was nearly pulled in by the stewards because I was so far behind, I just didn't realise how fast they go in a race. It would have been amusing if I'd been referred to Portman Square on my first ever ride at the age of 32."

Inevitably, there have been mistakes sprinkled in among the triumphs. The most notable, perhaps, was when Caulfield announced that the jockeys' ride would henceforth be decided on prize-money won, only to revert to the old formula of winners' riders when it became clear that hardly anyone, the riders included, wanted the change.

Yet a refreshing willingness to admit his error and endure the embarrassment meant that the incident was soon forgotten, except by Caulfield. "I know I've made one or two errors along the way, but I'm very aware that one stupid move could undo seven years' work. The job still has a fear factor. I'm nervous each day when I come to work, and when I go racing, I park my car and every time my heart's thumping. That's a good sign."

Whatever his inner turmoil, however, you suspect that for as long as Michael Caulfield is batting for the jockeys, it is every-one else who should be worried.

'Whenever I go racing, I park my car and every time my heart's thumping. That's a good sign'



Michael Caulfield: putting forward a strong case for jockeys Photograph: David Ashdown

Guineas support for Sante

Ladbroke's yesterday reported strong support for the French challenger A Votre Sante in the 1,000 Guineas at Newmarket and have cut Crispette Head's filly to 10-1 from 16-1.

"Given the excellent record of Crispette Head in the 1,000 Guineas and the support we have seen today for A Votre Sante, the filly must command respect in a market dominated by just three fillies up to now," said Ladbroke's Ian Wassell.

Henry Cecil's Bessa Sham, who followed up her success in a Newbury maiden with a three and a half length victory over the John Dunlop-trained Binta Shadid in Ascot's Fillies' Mile, heads the market at 2-1.

Blue Duster, trained by David Loder and unbeaten in four outings as a two-year-old, is second favourite at 7-2 with Binta Shadid 7-1. Nibbled at

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Pair Of Jocks (Folkestone 2.40)
NB: Monks Soham (Folkestone 2.10)

in the betting for the 2,000 Guineas has been John Gosden's colt Pommard, who is now 20-1 from 25-1.

Saturday's Classic trial meeting at Kempton might throw up a lively outsider for next month's Guineas meeting.

Four of the 18 fillies entered in the Masaka Stakes (C) Miss Universal (trained by C Brittain), Sea Spray (P Chapple-Hyam), Sil Sila (B Smart) and Rannia (J Dunlop) — are engaged in the 1,000 Guineas while four of the 13 colts in the Easter Stakes — Believe Me (Hannon), Elshabba (J Dunlop), Line Dancer (W Jarvis), and Regiment (R Hannon) — are still in the 2,000 Guineas.

ANTI-POET BETTING ON THE CLASSICS (Ladbroke's): 1,000 Guineas: 2-1 Bessa Sham, 7-2 Blue Duster, 7-1 Binta Shadid, 10-1 A Votre Sante, 20-1 Miss Universal, 20-1 Sea Spray, 33-1 Line Dancer, 33-1 Rannia, 33-1 Regime, 33-1 Believe Me, 33-1 Elshabba, 33-1 Pommard, 33-1 Nibbled at, 40-1 others.
2,000 Guineas: 5-4 Aghar, 7-1 Mark Of Emson, 10-1 Bessie King, 12-1 Royal Colours, 14-1 Pommard, 20-1 Sea Spray, 20-1 Line Dancer, 20-1 Regime, 20-1 Believe Me, 20-1 Elshabba, 20-1 Pommard, 20-1 Nibbled at, 20-1 others.

David Bridgwater, runner-up on Encore Un Peu in Saturday's Grand National, was banned for five days at Exeter yesterday after being found guilty of excessive use of the whip aboard Habasha. His mount was never travelling well in the marcs handicap hurdle and Bridgwater rode with determination to put her into contention before failing by a head to catch Hulo Mary Doll.

But the stewards were not impressed and found him guilty of using his whip with unreasonable frequency and stood him down for five days (10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 April).

Colin Vickery, the stewards' secretary, said: "The stewards felt Bridgwater breached the rules on two counts as he hit the horse 12 times, some of which were out of stride pattern."

Bridgwater said: "She was favourite, is a little ungainly and if I hadn't ridden her out they might have had me in for not trying. So what am I supposed to do?"

Flakey Dove gives birth, page 5

A National fall

Betting shop turnover on Grand National day was down by two per cent, according to bookmakers William Hill. Two reasons were the continuing influence of the National Lottery, and the smaller size of the field at Aintree, the firm said.

RACELINE	
0930 1684	COMMENTARY
NOTTINGHAM	101
FOLKESTONE	102
WIMBORNE	103
FULL RESULTS SERVICE	
368	
Racing News, 1000-1000, 1000-1000	

INDEPENDENT RACING SERVICES	
0891 261 +	LIVE COMMENTARY RESULTS
FOLKESTONE	91
NOTTINGHAM	92
WIMBORNE	93
ALL RESULTS SERVICE	
0891 261 +	
Racing News, 1000-1000, 1000-1000	

NOTTINGHAM

2.00 Royal Raport 4.00 Janus
2.30 Joint Venture 4.30 Pine Essence (nb)
3.00 Loose Talk 5.00 Shu Gaa
3.30 MATTEAMIA (nap)

GOING: Good to Soft (Good in places).
STALLS: Standby only. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High numbers best over 5f and 6f. 1st half, 2nd half, 3rd half, 4th half, 5th half, 6th half, 7th half, 8th half, 9th half, 10th half, 11th half, 12th half, 13th half, 14th half, 15th half, 16th half, 17th half, 18th half, 19th half, 20th half, 21st half, 22nd half, 23rd half, 24th half, 25th half, 26th half, 27th half, 28th half, 29th half, 30th half, 31st half, 32nd half, 33rd half, 34th half, 35th half, 36th half, 37th half, 38th half, 39th half, 40th half, 41st half, 42nd half, 43rd half, 44th half, 45th half, 46th half, 47th half, 48th half, 49th half, 50th half, 51st half, 52nd half, 53rd half, 54th half, 55th half, 56th half, 57th half, 58th half, 59th half, 60th half, 61st half, 62nd half, 63rd half, 64th half, 65th half, 66th half, 67th half, 68th half, 69th half, 70th half, 71st half, 72nd half, 73rd half, 74th half, 75th half, 76th half, 77th half, 78th half, 79th half, 80th half, 81st half, 82nd half, 83rd half, 84th half, 85th half, 86th half, 87th half, 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sport

Judging the pace when you can't see where you are going is difficult
— you are torn between taking it too easy and maintaining a lead

I had a perfect score in Brazil on Sunday: pole position, led from the start, won the race and set the fastest lap. My second win in succession was rather different to Australia three weeks before, when I only took the lead with a few laps to go. That was one reason why I wanted to dominate at Interlagos.

It couldn't have been better. I got the best out of the equipment last weekend and the Rothmans Williams Renault team did a brilliant job. Everything came together beautifully. What's more, the race was run in very tricky conditions: we had to contend with as many variables as you could possibly imagine.

About half an hour before the start, the weather let rip as only it can in South America. As we made our way round the circuit to the starting grid, I remember noticing that

water was pumping backwards through the drains. On the inside of turn 10, there was literally a fountain of water about two feet high as the drainage system tried, unsuccessfully, to cope with the deluge. There were crashes of thunder and lightning: very, very treacherous conditions in which to start a race.

If you have to race under those circumstances, it's almost a no-win situation. If you don't keep your foot down there is the risk that someone unsighted by the spray could crash into the back of you. By the same token, if you keep your foot on it and there's too much standing water, you could easily aquaplane off the track. To judge the pace when you can't see where you are going is extremely difficult. Choosing whether or not to start the race on Sunday must have been a close

call but, fortunately, everything went off without incident.

My team-mate, Jacques Villeneuve, gave a very impressive performance in his second grand prix race by taking second place off the line after starting third on the grid. He fought hard to maintain second, with Jean Alesi hard on his heels, but unfortunately Jacques spun off on lap 27 and landed in a gravel trap.

There had been some fairly rapid decision-making just before the start. We reckoned it was going to rain for at least the first 10 laps and, more than likely, the track would not dry out for at least another 10 laps. That would take us towards half distance (35 laps), so it seemed sensible to go for just one pit stop. It turned out to be a good call by the team although, for a while, it was touch and go.



DAMON HILL

Around lap 20, I thought the track was going to dry out. I got on the radio and said it would be time for slick tyres in a couple of laps — but then it rained again. The trouble was, it was raining on one half of the circuit but not on the other. The start/finish area and the first couple of corners were bone dry and yet, on the back of the circuit, it was ac-

tually raining very hard. The weather report had said there would be local showers, but this was unbelievably local; dramatically different conditions within a quarter of a mile — and I carried on like that for a good third of the race. It was very difficult to decide when to come in for slicks and the limiting factor was going to be the need to take on more fuel. Fortunately, conditions started to turn at the point when I needed to make my pit stop. In fact, the timing was spot on.

When I returned to the track with slicks, my lap times started to come down even though the circuit was still soaking wet in some places. It was one of those tricky situations where the temptation is to be extra careful: you are torn between taking it too easy and maintaining a healthy lead. Alesi was in

second place and he was the sort of driver who would really start eating into my lead if he got the bit between his teeth. But I remembered that, after crashing out of the Australian Grand Prix, Alesi had said he wanted to finish this race, so his usual exuberance was probably curbed by that thought.

I managed to extend the gap to a healthy margin but I must admit to feeling a little nervous when Rubens Barrichello spun off in front of me.

That incident underlined the fact that the race isn't over until you see the chequered flag. Last year, I had this race in the bag until I was robbed by a suspension failure. Experience in Formula One teaches you that there are many things which are in the lap of the gods and outside your control. With a 20-second lead, you

can do your best to concentrate, maintain the gap and ensure you don't make any silly mistakes — but then little things can deprive you of victory. You just pray that everything runs smoothly. On Sunday, it was perfect.

In fact, the whole weekend had been perfect. I felt good about my driving; I felt very happy in the car and enjoyed every lap. And, when it was over, I was presented with my trophy by one of the world's greatest sportsmen. I don't know much about football but I know enough to appreciate Pele's achievements and his standing in the game. To receive the trophy from the great Brazilian was an honour and it's little touches like that which are as memorable as achieving a perfect score.

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Ivanisevic armed and dangerous

John Roberts talks to the big-serving Croat who has added a new dimension to his game — one which he hopes will take him to the Wimbledon singles title

Pity about the pain in the neck, but things do tend to go awry for Goran Ivanisevic at important moments in his career. Sometimes he is deserted by his mighty serve. Frequently his temperament lets him down. Occasionally he runs out of luck, as was the case when he awoke with the crick which forced him to retire against Andre Agassi after only 10 minutes of the Lipton final in Florida on Sunday.

But for the interventions of Agassi and Pete Sampras, along with an inability to hold his concentration, the 24-year-old Croat would have been a Wimbledon champion by now. That remains his chief ambition, and a distinct possibility judging his fresh approach to the game of late.

Ivanisevic has advanced to seven ATP Tour finals in nine tournaments this year, winning titles in Zagreb, Dubai, Milan and Rotterdam and producing a greater variety in his play than 650 aces would indicate.

His form is brighter (his one success last year was at the Grand Slam Cup in Munich in December) and his mood seems lighter. For example, Ivanisevic and his coach, Vedran Martić, spent most of the 48-minute rain delay which came to his rescue during the semi-final against Pete Sampras reminiscing about old times at the tennis club in Split.

"We were talking about how the kids are very spoiled now," Ivanisevic said. "When we were very young we had to renovate the courts. I was staying very far away from the tennis club, and I always had the job of carrying the clay and the garbage. We started to laugh like idiots thinking about that, like I am winning [against Sampras] 6-2, not losing."

Then there are the serious contests: card games in which he partners his coach against his parents. "We play an Italian game, *briscola*, and my father is pretty experienced. It is a big battle of pride, and we are losing all the time. There are all sorts of signs which you are not allowed to do in this game; a little cheating, you know. My father doesn't know that we are cheating, but it doesn't help. I don't like to lose at any kind of cards. The other

night they beat us pretty badly, and I couldn't sleep."

Martić, 29, is as much a companion as a coach. Promising as a junior, he later played mostly league tennis in Germany, where he was studying. Ivanisevic hired his boyhood friend on a year's contract a few months after losing the services of the Australian, Bob Brett, last October. Brett, who guided Ivanisevic to Wimbledon finals in 1992 and 1994, having previously enjoyed success with Boris Becker, finally despaired, concluding that his advice was no longer heeded.

"I wanted to win matches so badly, and I couldn't produce anything good on the court," Ivanisevic recounted. "I was losing to anybody, everybody; it was just not there."

'I lost my mind a bit in Milan a couple of weeks ago but that was just for a couple of seconds'

"We came to Essen, and I lost to [Martin] Sinner and then I lost in the doubles at two in the morning, and Bob said to me: 'Eight o'clock practice.' I said: 'I'm not going to practise, because, practise or no practise, I cannot beat anybody. Then he said: 'We're finished.'"

"Bob had said so many times [before] that we were finished, and after half an hour I would say: 'Sorry, Bob, everything is OK.' But next morning he called me and said he wanted to talk to me, and I went to his room and he showed me a press release he had written. I was shocked. I almost got a heart attack. I knew it was over. I didn't want to beg. It was his decision, and probably he was right."

Ivanisevic contacted Martić at Christmas and invited him to join him in Australia in January. "I phoned Bob and asked him what he thought of Vedran becoming my coach. Bob gave me full support."

"For four and a half years I was part of Bob's family, and I

still have a good relationship with his kids and his wife, and we talk normally. At Indian Wells I did a little jogging at six in the morning, and I was just coming back from running and Bob was going out to run. Before, I never could imagine me running before Bob. That is something unbelievable."

Ivanisevic finds it helps that Martić speaks the same language and has known him since he was nine years old. "Everybody asks if he is my brother," Ivanisevic said. "He is my coach, my friend, everything. A lot of coaches are just there because they are paid to be there and, OK, they practise with the guy and say, 'See you tomorrow.' I didn't want a coach like that. I want to be good friends, which I was with Bob and have been with Vedran for 15 years."

"What's good for me is that Vedran has put fresh things in my mind, and suddenly I clicked. I know I am probably going to have some tough times, because it is tough to go on like this. But I realise that the next couple of years could be my best years in tennis."

"I have changed my attitude. I am more calm on the court. I lost my mind a little bit in Milan a couple of weeks ago, but that was just for a couple of seconds."

There is evidence, too, that Ivanisevic is liberating shots which have lain dormant behind a serve which has set records for aces that will stand, he says, "for 200 years, until robots come along."

In particular, he is executing the forehand down the line to good effect. "It is one of the most important shots in tennis, which I used before once every five months."

Of immediate concern is Ivanisevic's fitness for a Davis Cup tie in Ukraine, which starts on Friday. After that, his thoughts will turn to the series of clay-court tournaments leading up to the French Open. And then comes Wimbledon.

Ah, yes, Wimbledon. "Wim-



Goran Ivanisevic: A man in form with four ATP titles so far this season Photograph: AP

A drop kick is the result of enterprise and real skill and should count for more than a penalty

Rugby is now like a merry-go-round whose speed is controlled by someone who does not quite understand the mechanism but is doing his best to keep the contraption under some kind of control. In the last year the pace has accelerated alarmingly. Some of the passengers find this exhilarating, others are fearful, others are banging on for dear life, while others again will lose their hold and be flung into the watching crowd, as a few already have been.

Who would have thought that Jonathan Davies would come back to union, even if his return — not entirely through his own fault — has been something of a let-down? Who would have predicted that Wigan would be playing Bath twice in May 1996, once under union rules, once under league?

Though Jeremy Guscott is entitled to do exactly as he

pleases, I am sorry he has decided not to participate in these encounters. He is wrong, I think, in regarding them as a piece of showbusiness. They may force rugby to change even more rapidly than it is changing already.

I would expect Wigan to win the league match easily and Bath to win the union match narrowly. Whatever happens, questions are going to be asked about various aspects of the union game.

The first is the line-out. Do we need a line-out at all? If we do, is there not a case for legalising lifting, which happens anyway? Wigan may indeed conquer the line-out — they may try to ignore it altogether by throwing over it to the back. They may have short lines on their own throw. We shall learn something.

We shall learn something, too, about ruck and maul. It



ALAN WATKINS on rugby

may be that Wigan will show defending sides how to cope with the driving or walling maul, which I have long maintained is illegal. It seems that some people are now coming around to my point of view.

League-school values are also different. I should like to see the drop-goal rewarded in relation to the penalty. In 1954, when Denzil Thomas of Neath won the match against Ire-

land with a drop and was never picked for Wales again, a successful kick was worth the same as a try, three points. Shortly before that, it had been worth four.

I would not want to go back to that ratio which, under current values, would make a drop worth seven points. I would not even wish to make it count for as much as a try. But there is a convenient number between three and five, which is four. A drop kick is the result of enterprise and real skill, and should count for more than a penalty.

But there is a wider question. Why should place kicks exist at all? There may be a case for penalising foul or unfair play, such as deliberately killing the ball, with a free pot at goal. There is another school of thought which maintains that guaranteed possession, followed by a kick,

whether tapped or to touch, is adequate recompense for the wronged side.

Now that possession is maintained at the line-out, many teams prefer to go for touch rather than for goal. Similarly, they may opt for a scrum when the offence occurs close to their opponents' line (as Harlequins did against Sale on Saturday) and there is a possibility of seven points rather than a probability of three.

And yet, why should the value of a try be increased to seven merely because of a successful kick at goal? Any justification is bound to be historical rather than rational. There is a strong case for abolishing the conversion completely.

This is unlikely to happen during my lifetime. There will almost certainly be a premium on place-kickers — despite the developments I have just men-

tioned. Therefore, it would be helpful if the papers published lists of players giving percentages of successful kicks at goal besides totals of points. It may be that John Liley of Leicester would still come out top of the first division if the former criterion were adopted in addition to the latter. It would be nice to know, all the same.

I should like to say that I am deeply attached to the scoreboard at the Richmond Athletic Ground. At the top it announces itself, in capitals, as SCOREBOARD, as if it might be mistaken by a careless observer for an inter-continental ballistic missile instead. Underneath, in much smaller letters, it specifies the teams on display. It testifies to the old amateur spirit of rugby football.

It could hardly be a siller construction. Clearly, under the new regime, it cannot be long for this world.

Presentation remains the missing link

Dave Hadfield, who watched four out of the six games in the opening round of Super League, assesses the impact of a whole new oval ball game

It would not be exaggerating the value of the opening performances of Paris St-Germain and London Broncos if their players were to be given medals before their match at Charlton on Thursday night.

Whatever else they might achieve in this and subsequent summer seasons, they got the Stones Super League away to a start that ensured that the first weekend of the new competition would go down as a success.

The fact that both sides won — and that Paris did so before a crowd of nearly 18,000 — undermined some of the prevailing prejudices against the new shape of the sport. They showed that whatever might be wrong with Super League as a concept, it is not the inclusion of London and Paris.

The atmosphere at the Stade Charlyon Friday night was different from that at any game I have seen in France. The crowd was younger, more cosmopolitan, infinitely more sustained in its enthusiasm.

Agreed, more than half that crowd had got in by applying for, rather than paying for, tickets. But that is beside the point; the key was to get them there. The attendance at Halifax on the Saturday night was less encouraging, but London's victory was another unexpected bonus. Teams from the two capital cities which are capable of winning matches against opposition as competent as Sheffield Eagles and Halifax would be a genuinely new and exciting element in the game and many will be willing to continue their good work.

Unfortunately, there was too much elsewhere that was all too familiar. There were two hopelessly uncompetitive sides — Oldham and Workington Town — incapable of making Wigan and St Helens raise a sweat. Those are the sort of non-competitions that Super League is supposed to abolish. No sign of that on the first weekend.

There were mixed signals, as well, from the way in which clubs presented their games. Much emphasis has been put on the importance of pre-match entertainment, but the signs on a chilly March weekend were that nobody in the crowd cared very much about that aspect.

Even in Paris, the presence of "France's top rap band" attracted few into the stadium

early. Many came in after the start of the main match, in fact.

Oldham had a Tina Turner lookalike — an admission of the derivative nature of much of the thinking, if ever there was one — Leeds and Halifax had sky-divers who failed to dive out of the sky. Where it was dark, there were fireworks; where it was light, there were balloons.

Leeds laid on the widest range of pre-match activities, but their build-up on the pitch was also the most embarrassing. The non-arrival of the parachutists, a depleted steel band and a compere whose sole function seemed to be to get up the collective nose made it a squirm-inducing launch.

Even the balloons were reluctant to leave the ground, and when the music and the pom-pom dancers burst into activity for a try that had already been disallowed the phrase "teething problems" no longer seemed adequate. The contrast with the spectacular way to which Auckland Warriors staged their first home match a year ago was total.

Leeds were also an example of how the mood of the first weekend often depended on factors that had nothing to do with Super League or summer rugby. Their spectators are on a downer at the moment, with a dismal Challenge Cup semi-final defeat still fresh in their minds, and they were not in the mood to be jollied along.

At Odsal, on the other hand, a rare five-figure crowd was in the mood to be jollied along and a notoriously atmosphere-free ground had a different feel to it. But that was not because of the excellence or otherwise of the Muldoon Brothers' country and western. It was because Bradford are going to Wembley and suddenly seem a side worth watching. A wintry weekend was no test of the long-term viability of summer rugby. Perhaps the entertainment will stir the blood more when the weather is better.

For now, a weekend that may be remembered as the start of a bold, new future or the time when rugby league headed off down a cul-de-sac will be summed up for me by two contrasting images. At Headingley the pitch seemed to have responded to summer rugby by turning overnight into a desert. And at Odsal it snowed.

Clarke's hopes lifted

Hopes are rising that Phil Clarke will be able to play again despite breaking his neck, writes Dave Hadfield. The former Wigan and Great Britain loose forward cracked the fourth vertebra in his spinal column in three places while playing for Sydney City Roosters against North Queensland on Saturday.

It was feared that his career was over, but tests have shown that there is no permanent damage. Clarke is hoping to play again before the end of this season, but a comeback next year could be a more realistic target.

His mother and father are with him in Sydney after arriving for a holiday unaware of the injury that had befallen him during their journey.

Shaun McCrae, the St Helens coach, expects to have Paul Newlove available for the Good Friday derby against Wigan. Newlove went off with a suspected broken thumb on Sunday, but passed an examination yesterday. Simon Booth, how-

ever, is out for at least three weeks with medial ligament damage, putting his Wembley place in some doubt. Derek McVey is under consideration as his replacement against Wigan.

McCrae is asking the Rugby League whether four replacements will now be allowed at Wembley, in line with the other rule changes introduced for Super League which will also apply for the final. "As I understand it, all the other new rules will be in use, so I can't see why we should be limited to two substitutes," McCrae said.

Wigan are to sign Chris and Phil Farrell, the 15-year-old twin brothers of their Great Britain loose forward, Andy.

Maurice Lindsay, the European Super League chief executive, hailed the attendances on the first weekend of summer rugby as a triumph. The average of more than 9,000 for the opening matches in the top division was the best since the one division system was scrapped in 1973.

sport

Johnson
prolongs
Nicol's
Open jinx

Squash

Peter Nicol fell foul of his British Open jinx again yesterday when he lost in the first round in Cardiff. The British national champion, who has failed to win a match in four attempts at the event, was beaten 15-13, 15-12, 3-15, 9-15, 15-13 in 96 minutes by Paul Johnson, the No 7 seed.

Nicol was fanned to complete the double of the closed and open British titles but Johnson had other ideas. The world No 27 won on the same court where Nicol had defeated the great Jansher Khan in 1994.

Successful first-match defeats over the previous three years to Jansher, Craig Reedie and Juhani Bondar, seemed to pre-empt Nicol's mind from the start. He lacked the incisive and positive approach which normally makes his rallying so forceful. From leading 11-6 in the fifth game, Nicol became so loose and defensive that Johnson was able to force victory in three more overs.

"This is my first win over Peter since he rose into the world top 10, although I used to beat him easily and often as a junior. Perhaps that was in his mind today," Johnson said.

Johnson got the benefit of a dubious decision at 5-3 in the fifth game, but that was balanced out two rallies later when a burst ball which should have been ruled a let was called as a point to Nicol. It was the replacement ball that helped Johnson to victory, however.

The new ball invader allowed me to pick up rhythm and pace just as Peter seemed to tire," Johnson said.

Johnson will now play Tony Hand, who defeated Ahmed Barada, the world junior champion from Egypt, 15-11, 15-9, in 54 minutes.

In the women's championship, Cassie Jackman took her revenge against Linda Charman, who had put her out of the National Championship. Jackman now faces Vicki Cardwell, the 40-year-old former British Open champion, who defeated McGeenah Bell.

In the same half of the draw, Fiona Greaves, the eighth seed, beat Janie Thacker to set up a match against Rebecca Macroe, who defeated Donna Leaver.

TODAY'S FIXTURES
Football
7.30: Arsenal v Manchester United (FA Cup)
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National plan to push the numbers up

Racing

JOHN COBB

For those that did not manage to find the Grand National winner, the bad news is that it is likely to be even harder next year. With only 27 runners going to post and a handicap snip becoming the first favourite to win the race for 14 years, Saturday's race presented the best chance for some time for form students to see their calculations work out. Now, the British Horseracing Board and Aintree

racecourse, concerned that the race attracted the smallest field for 36 years, are to discuss changes to revamp the race in order to make it more competitive.

Of the 27 horses that took part, only nine carried their correct handicap weight, with the rest shouldering 11st even though their abilities justified a less demanding impost.

Possible changes include ensuring that the top weight carries 12st, rather than the 11st 7lb that Young Master humped round this year, and altering the

rule which bars entries officially rated lower than 120 when the race is published in early February.

That rating qualification denied a run in this year's race to eight horses, including the subsequent Eider Chase winner, Killashin.

The idea behind keeping lower rated horses out of the race is to ensure that the sort of moderate horse that disfigured some previous runnings of the race and that were a danger to themselves and other competitors, are excluded. That

argument seems rather more important than ensuring that the race is a lively medium for bookmakers and punters.

Aintree's clerk of the course, RICHARD EDMONDSON, NAB: Beldray Park (Hampton 3.30) NB: Royal Silver (Ludlow 2.15)

Charles Barnett, defended the rating qualification. "The idea of the ratings was to avoid no-hopers running in the race be-

cause they would probably be the sort of horses that wouldn't be suited to the course. I would rather have 27 good horses than 40 no-hopers in the race."

Bookmakers William Hill are also looking for changes at Aintree after reporting betting-shop turnover on Grand National day was down by 2%, despite the recent 1% cut in betting duty.

"We believe that part of the reason for the downturn is the continuing influence of the National Lottery," the firm's Ian Sperring said. "While the small-

er field, the earlier start of the National and the fact that the BBC screened only three races this year were other contributory factors."

It was noticeable that potentially one of the best betting races of the day, the Cordon Bleu Handicap Hurdle, was relegated to the dead end of the meeting instead of receiving prime-time coverage."

The same firm have tried to claw back some of the money they had hoped to see at Aintree by opening betting on Monday's Irish Grand National.

Son Of War and Wynde Hildie, who made ignominious departures at Aintree, are 8-1 and 10-1 chances respectively to gain compensation at Fairyhouse, but the favourite, at 3-1, is the Charlie Brooks-trained Sunny Bay, who had been extremely impressive at Newbury the previous week. He, along with other British-trained acceptors in Full Of Oats and Tartan Tyrant, will take part only if they are granted a soft surface. Final declarations for the race, which is to be shown live on Channel 4, are to be made on Friday.

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Punters miss out as Dettori rides solo

Frankie Dettori had just one mount at Nottingham yesterday but made it tell with a victory on Weet Ees Girl. Surprisingly there was little interest in the fly in the betting for the Cin-

derhill Maiden Stakes and she won at the rewarding odds of 14-1 after opening up at 6-1.

Punters burned their fingers by backing Joint Venture down to 4-11 from 4-6. But Weet Ees

Girl capitalised after Joint Venture lost several lengths when swerving left at the start.

But at Folkestone odds-on backers profited when Mick Fitzgerald won on Sorbiere.



HYPERION'S TV TIPS

ASCOT

1.55 Miroswald
2.30 Capenway (nb)
3.05 Involuntarily
3.35 Star Range

GOING: Good to Firm.
Right-hand course with testing uphill finish.

Course is near junction of A320 and A330. Railway station adjacent the course. AD-AMUSION: Members £12 (Junior Members 10-15 years, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 147th, 148th, 149th, 150th, 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